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ABSTRACT

The European Centre for the Development of Vocational Training (CEDEFOP) commissioned 12 experts in the vocational training (VT) systems of the individual member states of the European Community (EC) to develop monographs describing the EC members' VT systems and procedures/systems for certifying vocational qualifications. The 12 national studies were then analyzed to identify similarities and differences among the certification systems with respect to the following: underlying concepts, creation, and legal and institutional structures involved in implementation; access to qualifications; organizing principles of certification and examinations and examiners; trends and recent developments; and issues in certifying VT. The analysis revealed that all 12 countries are concerned with access to and parity of VT but are attempting to address both issues in different ways. To date, there is no official infrastructure to advise EC members on mobility of vocational trainees/students and workers between countries; however, pan-European projects are investigating the possibility of establishing equivalencies, and various bilateral agreements are experimenting with joint accreditation. (Appended are the following: overview of VT qualifications in the EC, definitions of tasks, acronyms list, and levels of qualification used by CEDEFOP in its research on comparability. Contains 23 references.) (MN)

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Systems and procedures of certification of qualifications in the European Community

European Institute of Education and Social Policy
Jean Gordon

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As part of the preparation by the social partners of the "Joint opinion on vocational qualifications and certification" adopted on 3 July 1992, the Centre was asked to undertake an analysis of the certification systems and procedures being used in the Member States of the European Community.

Information was lacking. Works on vocational training qualifications did not seem to include anything on their validation. What procedures are being used in the Member States to recognize qualifications by the award of a study title? What laws protect the "commercial value" of qualifications? Who has the power to certify?

Because they have ready access to the sources of information needed to answer these questions, the authors of monographs on vocational training systems, another of CEDEFOP's areas of work, were asked in most cases to carry out this work. The results of this study, carried out over a few months using a single grid of questions, take the form of twelve monographs currently available in the free series "CEDEFOP Panorama". In these works, the authors, after a brief review of the features of the vocational training system in their country, describe the main ways in which qualifications are validated and certified, whether this involves the preparation of study titles, certification procedures or the various methods of access to study titles.

Comparative analysis of the twelve national studies, delegated to an institute specializing in the international comparison of education and vocational training systems, was a first step towards a synthesis.

We have included this in the same free series so that it is widely available and in order to indicate to readers that we wish to receive as many comments as possible on this attempt at an overall view.

Taking account in a short document and in comparative form of very different, complex and constantly changing national situations is in some ways like trying to make a square out of a circle. Readers' comments should help us to improve this reference work and will help us to make it into a widely used resource.

As set out in the "Council Resolution of 3 December 1992 on the transparency of qualifications", the aim of this work is to help to "improve the mutual understanding of, and confidence in, the qualification systems of the different Member States and the qualifications themselves".

Project Officers: Maria Pierret and Burkart Sellin
Berlin, July 1993

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INTRODUCTION

1. Defining the concepts

Certification systems are not static structures. While they reflect the complex histories of the development of vocational education and training in each of the Member States of the European Community, they also respond to current economic and social needs and trends. Thus, under pressure from a rapidly changing industrial and economic environment in the 1980s, most of the systems have undergone either major or partial reform. Reforms in the Southern European countries have concentrated on building up the training offer within a structured system and increasing the number of young people obtaining vocational qualifications. The Northern European countries have been faced with the challenge of adapting their systems to a shifting employment scene.

This report, a comparative analysis of the systems and procedures found in the EC Member States, is based on 12 national monographs commissioned by Cedefop for the project. It aims to draw together in a common framework the main characteristics of the national systems. In the national monographs the detail and background of each system is described fully. The comparative analysis presents an overview focusing on what is common to, or what differentiates, the 12 systems.

As well as the monographs we have been able to draw on the expertise of the authors through both bilateral discussion and more importantly meetings organised by Cedefop. A first meeting in September 1992 in Berlin allowed the group of experts responsible for the national monographs to develop for the study the **Definition of Tasks** taking into account the particularities of each system (see **Appendix III** for the **Definition of Tasks**). Further meetings

organised in Brussels in January and May 1993 examined the national reports and the first drafts of the comparative analysis creating a useful exchange and dynamic between the detail of the national descriptions and the overview of the comparative analysis. We would like to take this opportunity to thank the national experts for all their help. A full list of the monographs is to be found in the **Bibliography (Appendix II)**.

The scope of the report is vocational education and training qualifications at skilled worker, technician and higher technician levels. Qualifications are deemed to fall within these categories if they allow the holder to enter the labour market in a (formally or informally) recognised occupation. Many of them satisfy a double objective in that they also allow the holder to continue to a higher level within the education and training system.

The report discusses the systems of qualifications, the way certificates and diplomas are developed and different types and methods of organisation of education and training. In the interests of clarity, before presenting the structure of the report we will define the main terms used.

Firstly a useful definition of the term qualification is given in Russ Russell's publication, **Vocational Qualifications in Europe: A Guide**. He notes three main meanings for the word "qualification":

- If we ask "what qualifies you to undertake this task?" then we might expect to receive a list of knowledge, skills attributes, experience or past performance (demonstrated as competent performance). This is the first meaning of the concept of qualification.

- One other expectation of an answer to the question might be "I have a public-licence to undertake this task." All Member States have a wide range of jobs or tasks that are restricted as to who may perform them. These range from medical tasks and legal tasks on the one hand to a complicated clutch of licensed activities such as driving cars, taxis, buses and heavy goods vehicles. This is the second meaning of the concept of qualification.

- The third answer to the question "what qualifies you to undertake this task?" is to state 'I have this Certificate'. This third meaning is a derivative of the two main meanings and contains elements of both. (RUSSELL, 1993)

In this study it is the third meaning which is relevant and has been used throughout.

Though in some countries there may be a definite hierarchy between the terms "certificate" and "diploma", with diplomas conferred for higher level awards than certificates, the distinction does not fundamentally change the ways they are designed and developed within the 12 national systems. Therefore for the purposes of this report the two terms will be considered synonomous.

The term "award", which covers both diplomas and certificates, is used to indicate either the diploma or the certificate conferred upon the successful candidate either after an assessment of their knowledge, skills or competences (whether they have followed a course or not) or after an assessment of prior learning.

However it is useful to note a different sort of distinction concerning certificates: the distinction between the certificates of achievement and certificates of entitlement (**L. BILL, 1991**). The former state how well a

candidate has done on a course or in an examination whereas the latter state what the candidate is now entitled to do in terms of work. Most of the awards dealt with in this report are "certificates of achievement", though in some cases they may also cover the entitlement aspect.

Different modes of study are presented throughout the report: full-time, part-time, apprenticeship and alternance. Full-time study, though not identical from one country to another in terms of the number of hours per week or weeks per year, has the same implications everywhere: it is the main activity of the person concerned. It may or may not - depending on the course - include a short period in a firm. Part-time study implies that the student is attending a limited number of hours of classes either in the evenings or during the day but they are not linked to a training or work contract. There is no organised alternance between the school or college course and the workplace. An apprenticeship, on the other hand, is taken to refer to a statutory training or work contract made between the trainee and the firm following explicit regulations which determine the time spent in the workplace and in the school, college or training centre. The training is deemed to take place in both locations. The term alternance training is used to refer to any form of training (other than apprenticeship) which takes place both in the workplace and a school, college or training centre. The workplace element is an integral part of the training rather than a work placement or job experience. Sandwich courses are included in this definition.

2. The approach

Systems and procedures of certification in all the countries are the result of a statutory or *de facto* interaction between a given set of actors and a series of processes which come together at different levels in the system: national, intermediate and local. The points of interaction and the actors and processes involved are of course specific to each national situation. **Diagram 1, The**

Interaction of the Actors and the Processes at the Different Levels within the Systems, attempts to demonstrate the general pattern of interaction at three major levels. It shows the range of processes which will be taken into account in the report and the actors involved at national, intermediate (geographical or hierarchical) and local levels. We have included at national level those actors who are involved in the centrally initiated and controlled phases of certification. They are the relevant ministries and the national organisations representing the social partners as well as, in some cases the different types of Chambers (Commerce, Industry, Crafts or Professional) . By awarding and accrediting bodies we mean to the British and Irish organisations mandated and recognised to confer and accredit national awards. "Umbrella organisations" include national coordinating bodies of Chambers, employers' organisations, professional bodies or other coordinating structures. The processes at this level are mainly policy planning and determination but may also include setting and marking examinations and the monitoring processes.

Though there can be some policy involvement at the intermediate level, it is mainly design functions which will be carried out as well, in some cases, as validation. The actors can be termed "intermediate" since they are situated either geographically or hierarchically between the central planners and policy makers and the local institutions responsible for implementation. They are firstly the regional authorities, autonomous or administrators of central policy, but also regional representatives of the social partners and the Chambers. The integrating mechanisms are those organisations mandated by government to bring together the educational and labour market research and development functions for vocational education and training awards. Their role is to advise government.

At local level the actors are the teaching institutions, the local representatives of the social partners as well as local firms and local government. They carry

out, advise and support the teaching, training, assessment and guidance of the students and trainees.

The dynamic view of the **Processes in the Development of Qualifications** is shown in **Diagram 2**, which is a system flow chart. It shows the same actors and processes as **Diagram 1** but broken down into a more detailed and stepped presentation. At each stage in the elaboration of diplomas and certificates a number of sub-processes are implemented. So all systems will go through complex procedures of consultation, decision making, negotiation, etc. in order to define aims and objectives for the certification of skills and competences and to design appropriate awards to be implemented in the system and assessed, accredited or validated before being tested on the labour market. The actors at each stage are governments and their agencies, representatives of the clients (parents, students, industry and commerce) and specialists, expert bodies and institutions.

A simple triangular model (**Diagram 3**) synthesises the **Processes** necessary for the production of certificates and diplomas (the "educational model"). The classic four-point "marketing model" (market research, product design, quality control and after-sales service) has been superimposed to show where the points of interaction lie. The diagram aligns, then, the processes for qualifications with their necessary responsiveness to the labour market and to terminology more readily understood in the world of work. The three stages of the educational model are shown in relation to the key function: legal recognition. Elaboration is the policy determination, planning and creation of the awards. Implementation refers to the teaching and assessment. The labour market evaluates the use of a vocational qualification. In the market model applied to vocational education and training, market research is the identification of existing and potential client groups, their characteristics and needs. Product design or development involves creating appropriate courses and programmes and making sure that the information about them reaches

potentially interested individuals. Monitoring the courses and programmes both during and after delivery constitutes the quality control required to ensure that client needs/demands are met as fully as possible. We can talk about after-sales service in so far as the consequences in terms of job take-up, skills acquired and possibilities of progression indicate how it worked out in the "real world" (BILBROUGH, PARKES and THOMSON, 1988).

Diagram 1

THE INTERACTION OF THE ACTORS AND PROCESSES AT THE DIFFERENT LEVELS WITHIN THE SYSTEMS

LEVELS	ACTORS	PROCESSES
NATIONAL	ministries social partners awarding and accrediting bodies Chambers of Industry, Commerce and of Crafts "umbrella organisations"	policy and planning determining policy central examinations evaluation: monitoring, validation and inspection
INTERMEDIATE (geographical or hierarchical)	government agencies social partners intergrating mechanisms Chambers of Industry, Commerce and of Crafts regional authorities	(re-)interpreting policy elaboration of diplomas and certificates design re-design validation
LOCAL	institutions enterprises social partners Chambers of Industry, Commerce and of Crafts local government	implementation teaching/learning assessment orientation/guidance

Diagram 2

PROCESSES IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF QUALIFICATIONS: SYSTEM FLOW

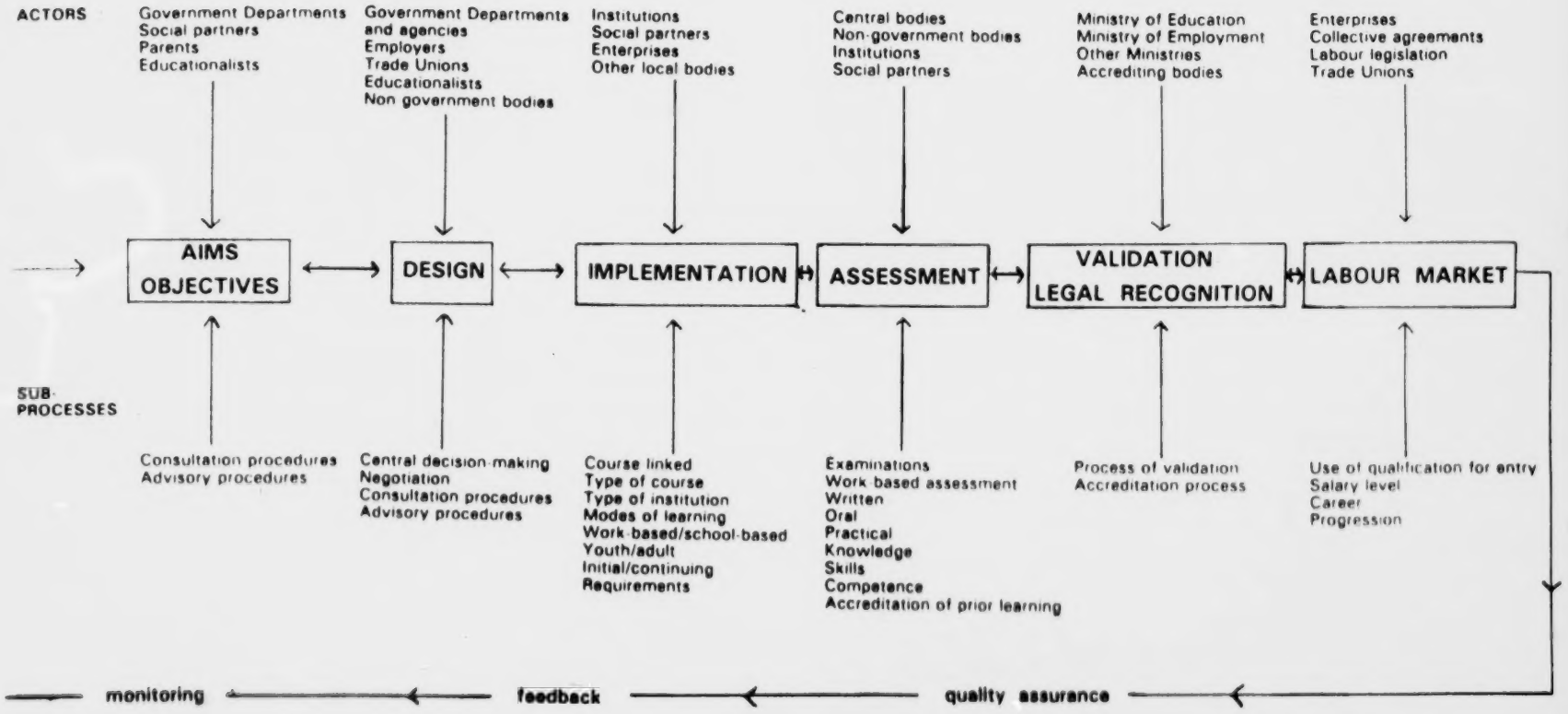
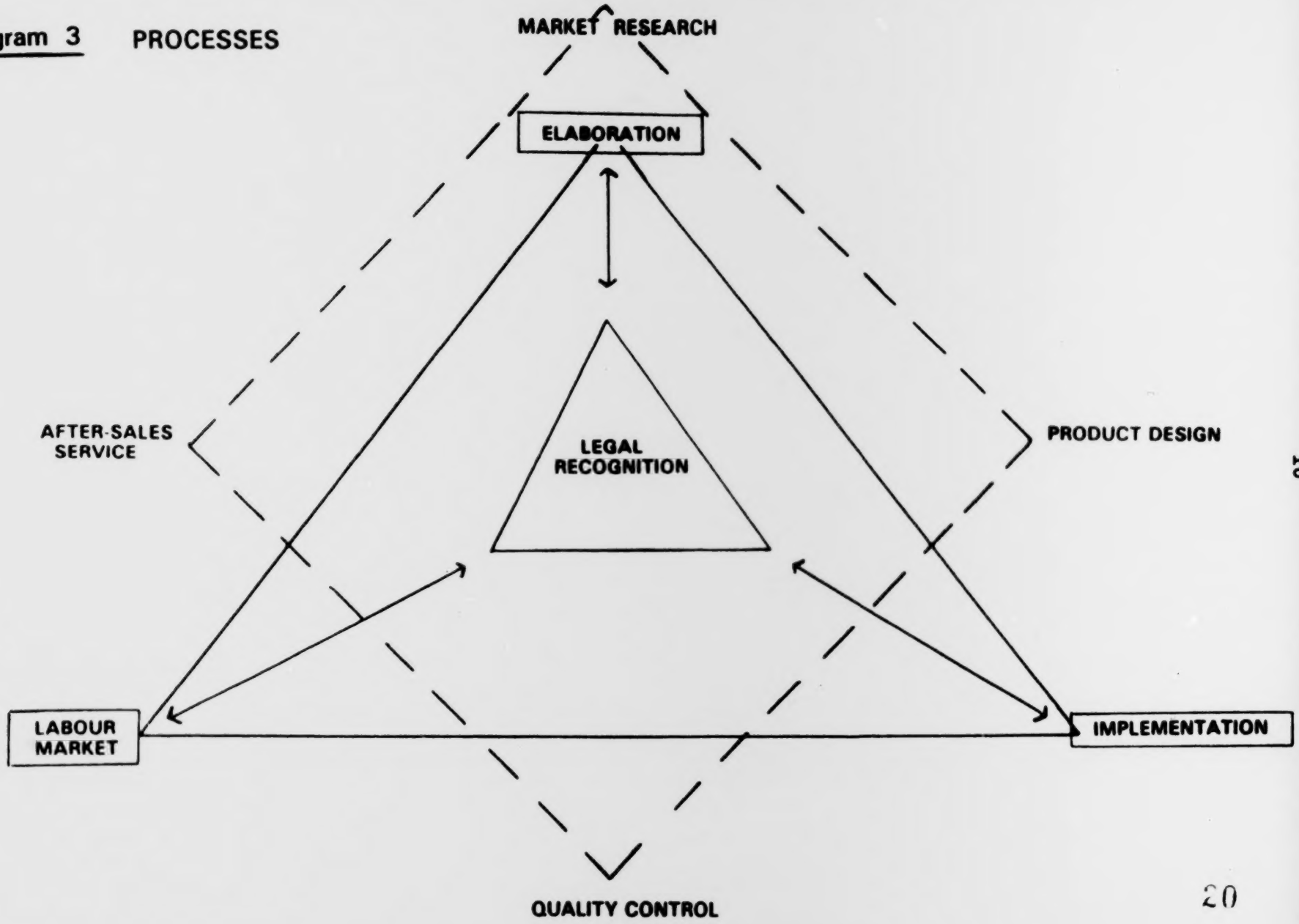


Diagram 3 PROCESSES



3. The structure of the report

The report presents a general overview of VET qualifications available in the Member States followed by a comparison of the systems and procedures of certification of qualifications.

For the sake of clarity and to make comparison possible, the awards have been organised according to the European Level system. The levels taken into account are Level 2 (skilled worker), Level 3 (technican) and Level 4 (higher technician). At technician level awards have been included which form an integral part of the second cycle of secondary education and have both a general and a technical/vocational content leading to either higher education or labour market entry.

Though these three levels make up the major part of certification of training in most European countries, the range covered has been broadened to include other target groups. The certification of training courses for young people who leave the education system with no, or very low level qualifications continues to be a major preoccupation of many governments. These courses tend to be below Level 2, though not systematically, and may be called introductory qualifications. Certification of continuing education and training, a considerable development area over recent years, has also been included.

A general overview of these qualifications is presented in Appendix I. It shows the awards available for each of the levels and categories taken into account. For Levels 2, 3 and 4 the information is divided between full-time courses and work-based courses. The aim is to provide the reader with a rapid overview of provision in the Member States.

The report analyses the procedures by which vocational education and training awards are established in the Member States (Chapter I), describing the legal and institutional structures involved in the processes as well as the role of the central, intermediate and local authorities and bodies (see **Diagram 1**). Requirements necessary for the qualifications to be obtained and the assessment procedures and practices are then presented in Chapter II and III (see **Diagram 2**). Chapter IV will present main trends and recent developments while Chapter V indicates some major issues facing the systems.

1. CONCEPTS, CREATION AND IMPLEMENTATION

This chapter describes the procedures by which qualifications and certificates are conceived, developed and implemented. With reference to **Diagram 1** presented in the introduction, the actors involved at these stages are essentially at national level with some regional intervention depending on the country. In terms of the processes the chapter examines the first two stages (Aims and Objectives; Design) shown in the system flow in **Diagram 2** and summarised in **Diagram 3** as Elaboration.

Section 1 will deal with the legal responsibility for validation and recognition of awards. Section 2 will examine how the content of awards, and in particular that of the assessment is established. Emphasis is placed on the different bodies which play a role in developing the award and the extent and type of their responsibility.

Legal responsibility

1.1 The legal responsibility for the certification of qualifications presents a very complex situation with several layers of provision in each country. In most of the EC countries the Ministries of Education have final legal responsibility for all awards made within the initial education system, whether the awards are for general education or vocational education and training. For the latter this covers the full-time, school-based awards. In some countries it also covers some awards obtained through apprenticeship or other forms of part-time study or alternance.

1.2 Other government ministries may or may not have responsibility for certification but this will always be limited to certain types of award.

1.3 In addition, an initial distinction must be made between two groups of countries. In the first are those in which responsibility for certification has traditionally been centralised under the authority of the Ministry of Education. Other government departments have and do hold legal responsibility for awarding but it is limited. In the second group of countries a system of awarding bodies operates. The awarding bodies are organisations which are either set up and mandated by government but autonomous in their action, or they may be independent organisations (created by Royal Charter in the British case) and with the authority to make educational and training awards of a specific nature or range.

1.4 This distinction tends to determine whether or not the majority of qualifications available are organised into a system of "national qualifications" or official diplomas (called in French *diplômes d'état*) under the direct control of the Ministry of Education of the country.

This is clearly the case in **Italy, France, Luxembourg, Greece** and **Spain** where the Ministries control the complete process of producing qualifications, both academic and sometimes vocational. In **Ireland,** however, Ministry of Education control applies to school-based qualifications and some vocational training within the educational system. A process of accreditation by the Ministries of Education of the three Communities (French-speaking, Dutch-speaking and bilingual in Brussels) in **Belgium** ensures final responsibilty at this level. In addition, qualifications obtained in establishments run by the Communities are called "*diplômes officiels*".

In all of the above situations the mode of access to the award (full-time in schools, by apprenticeship, etc.) does not alter the legal responsibility for the qualification conferred. In **France, Luxembourg, Spain, Greece** and

Belgium, young people can obtain national qualifications for vocational education and training via full-time study.

1.5 The second most common situation among the countries examined is the role of the Ministry of Employment, which covers vocational training outside the area covered by the Ministry of Education. This usually involves a smaller number of qualifications. It could be said that these Ministries take over where the Ministries of Education leave off.

Usually the awards are for specifically labour market oriented training courses. This would include training schemes for young people who have left the initial education system without qualifications as well as for unemployed adults.

There are four common situations. Firstly, that of **Ireland** where the Department of Enterprise and Employment has a specific legal responsibility for certification in these areas though the course certificate is actually conferred by an awarding body (*FAS* or *NTCB/CERT*) under its auspices. In **Spain** there is a similar situation in that the Ministry of Employment certificates its own courses through *INEM*.

Secondly, in **France** the courses are financed, organised and examined under the responsibility of the Ministry of Employment but the certificates are accredited (*homologués*) by the Inter-Ministerial Commission for Accreditation which comes under the auspices of the Prime Minister's Office. This is obviously a question of credibility in a country where *diplômes d'état* play a dominant role.

At the other end of the spectrum is the third group, the **United Kingdom**, **Greece** and **Italy**, where the respective Ministries of Employment take

financial responsibility but do not play a direct role in certification. In the **United Kingdom** they have only an advisory role.

The final situation is that of **Luxembourg** where the Ministry of Employment has no legal responsibility in the certification of vocational education and training qualifications.

1.6 It is very common for the certification of specific occupational sector training such as the paramedical sector, agriculture or seamanship, to be the entire responsibility of other Ministries: Health, Agriculture, Navy, etc. However, in the Netherlands, since 1993 there has been a tendency to reduce the role played by other Ministries.

Normally they have full recognition within the national system, representing just a small percentage of total qualifications obtained. They are described in detail in each of the national monographs.

1.7 The final case (which must be described) is that of the systems which function around awarding bodies not under direct (or any) state control. It would appear that this configuration is common in those countries where historically the craft system held more importance for VET than school-based training.

Thus in **Germany** the role of the social partners is predominant in all vocational education and training awards. The competent bodies (*die Zuständige Stellen*), most of which are Chambers of Industry and Commerce and of Crafts, hold legal responsibility for the work-based part of the qualifications obtained under the dual system of apprentice training. Responsibility is shared with the Ministry of Education for each *Land* which certificates the school-based part of the training.

The **United Kingdom** and **Ireland** both have systems which use a number of awarding bodies. In the former country they are frequently quangos which are distanced from governments and largely independent but nevertheless under their influence. In the latter country they come under the auspices of Ministries. This has led to great disparity in qualifications and lack of coherence. Currently both countries are in the process of establishing national awards for VET.

1.8 One more situation must be mentioned. In all countries there are certificates awarded which are outside the national system(s) of recognition and accreditation.

In **France**, for example, certain sectors have developed a procedure of accrediting qualifications pertinent to their occupational area through their joint consultative committees.

In all countries private organisations can offer training courses at all levels. Frequently, however, at the end of the course, the participants obtain a certificate of attendance or attainment. Legal responsibility lies entirely with the centre offering the course and its recognition on the labour market will only reflect the credibility of the organisation itself. These courses are market-led. Their certificates will not be dealt with in detail in the following sections. In some cases, such as some centres in the Netherlands, trainees can obtain national awards. This is also the situation in **Germany** where private further and retraining centres operate within the framework of the Vocational Training Act under the supervision of public bodies to offer dual system qualifications.

This type of non-formal certification is very common for continuing education and training. In fact over the last two decades, one of the main problems in continuing education and training (CET) has been that courses

frequently did not lead to formal and therefore recognised qualifications and as such had no added value for the trainee. This explains why some systems such as those in **France** and **Belgium** provide a possibility of accreditation (*homologation*) and why others (**Ireland** and the **United Kingdom**) are in the process of creating a system into which all qualifications can be integrated. In **Spain** also recent legislation provides for a system of accreditation to be set up during the 1990s.

1.9 In summary the main partner is usually the Ministry of Education, with the Ministry of Employment taking a secondary role, the exception being the United Kingdom. Most full-time, school-based awards are under the authority of the Ministry of Education. Work-based awards and special schemes may come either under the Ministry of Education or the Ministry of Employment. Other ministries are only involved with training for their own occupational sectors. The result is that often the procedures of establishing and awarding qualifications does not vary much between the academic and the VET awards at all levels. There is very little involvement of the social partners in terms of legal responsibility, except of course in **Germany**.

Content and assessment

Section 2 will examine how the content of awards and their assessment are established. Emphasis is placed on the different bodies which play a role in developing the award and the extent and type of their responsibility. The awards considered are those included in the definition of the field of study.

Establishing the offer:

1.10 In most countries within initial education and training provision, it is the Ministry of Education which decides on the diplomas to be offered, as well as the level and specialism. This means that all qualifications obtained through full-time or part-time schooling before the young person is deemed to have left the educational system remain the responsibility of the Ministry of Education.

1.11 There are few exceptions. One type concerns decentralisation. In **Belgium** decisions are made by the individual *Ministères de l'Enseignement* for each of the (linguistic) Communities. In **Germany** also exclusive autonomy is given to each of the *Länder* with coordination at federal level, though the initiative may also come from organisations such as professional associations of teachers, parents' organisations, student bodies, etc. For the dual system, it is the *Bundesinstitut für Berufsbildung* (*BIBB*) which takes the initiative in consultation with the Federal Ministry for Education and Science, the employers' and employees' organisations and other professional bodies.

1.12 The other exceptions are the two countries in which there is no central decision making about what diplomas should exist: the **United Kingdom** and **Ireland**. In **Ireland**, though the Department of Education is the organising authority for all school-based education, several types of awarding body exist. As far as the **United Kingdom** is concerned there is no overarching ministerial control for VET qualifications.

1.13 Other ministries, and in particular the Ministry of Employment, normally make these decisions for the awards for which they are responsible.

1.14 The bipartite Trade Committees in **Denmark** can draft proposals for new courses which are submitted to the Ministry of Education and Research.

Determining objectives, content and assessment:

1.15 The general situation is that the Ministry, or other body responsible for the award, establishes a committee competent to decide on the objectives, content and type of assessment.

In **Belgium** the three Ministries of Education for the linguistic Communities establish *Conseils supérieurs* by level of provision which are permanent advisory bodies to the Ministry. They are assisted by ad hoc *Groupes de travail spécialisés*. The committees are obliged to take into consideration certain minimum conditions determined by the Prime Minister's Office.

There is a multi-tier system in **Denmark** whereby the competent Ministry establishes the objectives and a framework curriculum which is then made specific by the Trade Committees. Assessment remains the prerogative of the competent Ministry.

Though it is the Ministry of Education or other competent ministries which define the objectives of training courses in **France**, the knowledge and competences to be attained are established by the *Commissions Professionnelles Consultatives* (*CPC*) composed of representatives of the competent ministries, the social partners and the Inspectorate. Their role also includes updating the curriculum and determining the form of assessment for each diploma. Their role remains nevertheless consultative and the final decision will be made by the ministry responsible for the diploma under discussion. Under current practice the view of the *CPC* is generally accepted.

The *BIBB* is the integrating mechanism used in **Germany** to bring together the social partners and educationalists to establish and develop awards for VET. They decide on the creation of new awards and establish the

framework curriculum. The role of the social partners continues in the Chambers of Industry and Commerce and of Crafts where the type and content of the assessment is determined for the work-based part of the dual system of training. The school-based part of the curriculum and its assessment is determined by the Ministry of Education for the particular *Land* but following the outlines prepared centrally by the ***BIBB*** and the *Ständigen Konferenz der Kultusminister (KMK),* the Permanent Conference of Education Ministers.

Greece - At present it is the Ministry of Education which has overall authority. Courses for the caring, tourism and marine sectors are jointly validated by the Ministry of Education and the competent ministry. Under current reforms there will be a process of transfer of responsibility for programmes from the Pedagogical Institutes to the *OEEK*, the authority responsible for developing the national system of vocational education and training.

The situation in **Ireland** is more complex, both because autonomous bodies have traditionally organised VET certification and also because the whole system is under review with a view to making it more coherent under an overarching system. At present each awarding body defines the objectives, content and assessment for the awards it offers. So for youth training programmes and special programmes for the unemployed, it is the FAS, the employment and training body under the Department for Enterprise and Employment. Other sector specific bodies do the same for their own areas. In addition there is the National Council of Education Awards which coordinates technician-level training. Though there is a National Council for Curriculum and Assessment, it covers secondary-level courses only and no full vocational qualifications can be obtained through the secondary schools system.

Italy has on the one hand a very centralised system in which the Ministry of Education plays a predominant role, and on the other decentralisation for all special schemes and work-based training. Therefore all awards which are obtained within the initial education and training system are developed directly by the Ministry of Education. This includes nominating a national Examination Commission and writing the examination papers. All other courses are set up and developed by the regions and the training organisations with which they work. Their assessment is set locally but under the responsibility of an Examination Commission which includes representatives of the Ministry of Labour and the social partners. Both the state and the regions work in conjunction with the Institute for the Development of Vocational Training (*ISFOL - Istituto per lo Sviluppo della Formazione professionale dei Lavoratori*), a public organisation responsible for technical assistance to the ministries and regions on VET planning and programmes, research and development work and experimentation in the field.

Luxembourg is probably the best example of a totally centralised state with all decisions being made by the Ministry of Education. The *Chambres professionnelles* are nevertheless involved in the procedures for the craft certificates. Having decided which occupations or professions must be certificated, the Chambers then make proposals on the organisation and content of the training to the Ministry of Education. They also countersign the certificates.

It is the Ministry of Education (or the Ministry of Agriculture for that particular occupational sector) which determines the aims and objectives of courses in the **Netherlands** as well as setting the learning targets for all secondary awards and for the *MBO*. As far as apprenticeship is concerned, it is also the Ministry of Education which determines the curriculum framework including the outline syllabus, practical training programmes,

entry requirements, the duration of off-the-job training and finally examination requirements, in consultation, for the latter, with the National Commission for Vocational Education (*LOB*) and the National Examining Commission for the Apprenticeship System (*CEC*)

In **Portugal** the Ministries of Education and Employment each define the aims and objectives of courses for their particular areas of competence. For those areas under the Ministry of Education, that is full-time schooling and some vocational education and training, the course content is developed by the Ministry. However for the courses under the Ministry of Employment this responsibility is delegated to the tripartite *Comissões Técnicas Especializadas* for each occupational sector. They are in turn coordinated by a permanent tripartite body, the *Comissão Permanente de Certificadão*. In the latter case joint approval is given by both Ministries. Finally for apprenticeship, course content is decided by a specialised tripartite body: the National Commission for Apprenticeship.

The **Spanish** Ministry of Education and Science holds overall responsiblility for establishing the objectives, content and assessment for all the vocational awards offered within the initial education and training system. Reforms in 1990 introduced the social partners into the decision-making process through the *Consejo General de la Formación*. For the programmes run by the *INEM* and other organisations for the Ministry of Employment it is the latter which holds responsibility for all development. For higher level training programmes the universities are increasingly involved in developing and accrediting their own courses.

As described above, the **United Kingdom** system has traditionally been very decentralised with VET certification coming under a number of private bodies. In an attempt to add coherence to the system, to structure it by level and to facilitate progression between different levels and specialisms,

National Vocational Qualifications (NVQ) are in the process of being established in England, Wales and Northern Ireland. A similar development is taking place in Scotland with the Scottish Vocational Qualifications (SVQ). These awards are work-based and theoretical content is defined with regard to what is needed to perform certain tasks in the workplace. As a brief summary of the procedures, which are not however totally standardised, one could say that Lead Bodies (of which there are currently about 130) are asked to define objectives in terms of standards for the different levels. The standards are translated into content and assessment units by the awarding bodies, which then apply for accreditation by the National Council of Vocational Qualifications. In the initial mission statement the Lead Bodies were intended to include trade union representatives as well as employer representatives. It would however appear that in practice the latter is dominant. A second and more recent initiative has been the creation of General National Vocational Qualifications, and their Scottish equivalent, to provide broader education and training in certain occupational areas for school leavers. The standards for the pilot courses were developed in conjunction with the main awarding bodies (*BTEC*, *City and Guilds* and the *RSA*)

Main bodies

1.16 This section will look at the same issues but from the perspective of the organisations involved. In some cases overall authority always lies with the competent ministry, in others it may be shared with the social partners via different sorts of structure.

Ministry of Education

The Ministries of Education obviously hold a privileged position in the certification process. There is a hierarchy among government departments in this matter. In **France, Italy, Luxembourg, Spain, Denmark, Greece**, the

Netherlands, Portugal and **Ireland** they hold ultimate responsibility for all qualifications obtained through the initial education system. They set up the organisational structure which will determine the offer, define the content, the type of evaluation and its content. Each stage might be carried out solely by the central administration or by one of its agencies or through a structure of representative committees. Above all these Ministries assure the homogeneity of the system whereby qualifications are created and developed, as well as the process of evaluation and the results obtained.

In **Belgium** this responsibility is decentralised to the Ministries of Education of the three Communities which are not answerable to any overarching structure. Likewise in **Germany** the Ministry of Education for each *Land* takes charge of these stages but within a federal coordination structure, the *KMK*.

The **United Kingdom** is the outstanding exception. The Department for Education holds only an advisory role in certification and plays no direct role in the production of qualifications.

The Ministries of Education may also control the process of accreditation of awards outside the system. *Homologation* in **Belgium** refers to the process by which the Ministries of Education of the (linguistic) Communities guarantee the quality of certificates and diplomas offered by private institutions.

Ministry of Employment

It is very common for the Ministries of Employment to take responsibility for the certificates obtained on labour market oriented courses (young unskilled, unemployed, updating skills, etc.). This does not necessarily imply, however, that these awards have official national recognition. More often than not, though recognised by employers as valid qualifications, they are neither official diplomas nor accredited.

In **France, Ireland, Spain, Portugal, Belgium, Denmark**, the **Netherlands** and **Italy** this type of situation prevails with some national differences. In **Belgium** the Ministries of Employment also include the *Commissions paritaires* for what is called "industrial" apprenticeship. Whereas all awards made under the responsibility of the Ministry of Employment in **France** are accredited to the national system, in **Spain** all the courses organised and/or financed by the Ministry of Employment have, at present, no way of being accredited. Successful candidates obtain certificates of attendance. A system of accreditation is under discussion.

The Ministry of Employment in **Luxembourg** has virtually no role in the training process which is concentrated in the Ministry of Education. Their only participation is on a coordinating committee for continuing education and training.

The British Department of Employment though very active in the financing of training for unskilled young people and the unemployed takes only an advisory role in certification processes. Courses run on their financing are increasingly required to offer NVQs.

Other ministries

They take a very limited role which is specific to the occupational sector covered. In **Ireland, France, Greece, Spain** and **Denmark** various ministries are involved in certificating courses for sectors such as health, agriculture, merchant marine, etc. However in **France** the certificates obtained have to go through a process of accreditation whereas in **Ireland** each Ministry has its own certification board. In the **Netherlands** Ministry of Agriculture takes responsibility for this sector.

Permanent committees

A variety of permanent committees exists. The awarding bodies in the **United Kingdom** have what are usually tripartite committee structures for the different occupations and levels of training covered. In **France** on the other hand the committee structure is consultative and is organised and coordinated under the responsibility of the Ministry of Education. These *Commissions Professionnelles Consultatives* cover the 19 identified occupational sectors and bring together representatives of employers, trade unions, relevant government departments, educationalists, representatives of the Chambers of Industry and Commerce and of Crafts, and experts. Their role is to advise the ministry; this is also the role of the Belgian *Conseils Supérieurs* which are set up by the Ministry of Education in each of the Communities at specific levels (university, long higher education, technical education and training, etc.) to advise government. In **Denmark** the Vocational Training Council and the National Trade Committees are consulted on the aims, objectives and content of awards. Their point of view must be taken into account. The *Berufsbildungs Ausschusse* in each of the German *Länder* advises on training programmes. These are merely indications of the types of permanent structures set up to advise on vocational education and training awards.

Temporary committees

Though in most cases the committees and commissions set up are permanent structures there are examples of ad hoc committees to examine specific issues. This is the case of the *Groupes de travail* in **Belgium** which are groups of experts brought together to advise the *Conseils supérieurs*.

Chambers of Industry and Commerce and of Crafts

There are only two countries in which they have a specific role in the certification of skills and competences: **Luxembourg** and **Germany**. Under the dual system of apprenticeship in **Germany**, it is the competent bodies (*Zuständige Stellen*) of which most are Chambers of Industry and Commerce and of Crafts which organise and confer the awards for the on-the-job part of

the training. They fulfil this role based on a public mandate from government. In **Luxembourg** the Chambers advise on which occupations should be certificated as well as on their content and organisation. Craft certificates are countersigned by the relevant Chamber.

Awarding bodies

The awarding bodies are specific to the **United Kingdom** and **Ireland**. They can be either private or state-financed bodies which offer certificates and diplomas for vocational education and training in a range of occupations at varying levels. Their committee structures bring together representatives of government departments as well as those of employers and trade unions. Sector experts and educationalists are also represented. Their awards are nationally recognised.

Social Partners

As can be seen above, the social partners are frequently associated in the process of elaborating awards in a consultative role. The exceptions of course are **Germany** and **Luxembourg**, where the Chambers assure a decision-making role. In **Denmark** also the social partners, through the National Trade Committees, carry a lot of weight. In the **Netherlands** the National Commissions for Vocational Education (*LOB*s), on which the employers associations and the trade unions are represented, play a comparative role. With the advent of the NVQs in the **United Kingdom** the employers' role has increased while that of the trade unions has tended to decrease. In **Greece** current reforms are taking on board the need to associate the social partners in the devising of vocational education and training awards.

2. ACCESS TO QUALIFICATIONS: CONDITIONS, PROCEDURES, ROUTES AND MODES OF ACQUISITION

This chapter presents a change of perspective moving from the administrative viewpoint to that of the students or trainees, from how diplomas and certificates are conceived, developed and implemented by the providers to how the students or trainees obtain them. Entry requirements, modes of access and acquisition are the links between policy and planning at national and intermediate levels and implementation at local level (see **Diagram 1**).

Firstly there is the issue of the balance between full-time provision and apprenticeship type routes offered by the different European systems, as well as the trend towards more variety in the modes of acquisition provided.

The systems in the 12 countries have been under pressure in recent years to make more flexible the type of requirements necessary to follow a course or obtain a qualification. This issue of access to qualifications for those without the formal requirements or in a situation which makes it difficult to follow a traditionally structured course is examined in the light of developments taking place. Finally, linked to the latter, the chapter looks at the development of progression routes for VET award holders.

Issues of access to qualifications and modes of study: tradition and reform

2.1 Routes leading to VET qualifications in the 12 Member States, though varied and diverse, nevertheless present some basic similarities. No-one will be surprised to learn that most qualifications are obtained before or on leaving the educational system, i.e. during the period which can be considered "initial education and training". It would still be no exaggeration

to state that comparatively few people obtain recognised qualifications through continuing education and training despite recent reforms undertaken to encourage this process. It is clear for most governments that raising the general skills level of the population must in the coming years be brought about as much through continuing as through initial education and training. Hence the introduction of measures to make qualifications more accessible to adults: the second chance.

2.2 However as the monographs commissioned for this study show, the most common routes to qualifications in many countries still favour the initial, full-time route, though not to the exclusion of all others. The obvious examples are **France, Italy, Spain, Belgium** and the **Netherlands**. In the latter case there has been a substantial increase in the apprenticeship route over recent years.

2.3 In certain highly industrialised countries with an old established craft system, such as **Germany, Denmark, Luxembourg** and the **United Kingdom**, apprenticeship was for a long time, or still is, the main way of acquiring a qualification despite differences between these countries. In **Ireland** in the past, due to the high numbers of people who went to work in the **United Kingdom**, the British qualifications system, especially for craft occupations, used to be very important. The City and Guilds of London Institute, the main craft awarding body, is still a partner in the Irish certification set-up, giving joint awards with the FAS for a limited number of occupations.

While in **Germany** and **Denmark** the dual systems of apprenticeship train at skilled worker level, in the **United Kingdom** and **Ireland** part-time off-the-job training within the sandwich course structure is common at all levels from skilled worker to professional.

Significant differences exist between the countries. The German system was thoroughly overhauled in the late 1960s by the state, the employers and the unions to fit the needs of a modern economy. The role of the social partners is essential for the system to function correctly. The Danish system centres around a long-established practice of discussion and decision making among the social partners and educationalists. In both countries employers have been prepared to invest in the future by training young people. In the **United Kingdom**, however, the effects of the recession of the 1970s on heavy industry (increase in the need for technicians rather than skilled workers in those remaining), and the economic orientations of the 1980s (which on the one hand developed the tertiary sector and on the other introduced legislation reforming training processes), have led to the virtual collapse of craft apprenticeships, leaving behind a philosophy of adaptable methods of training but few employers willing to carry it out.

The above list is not however exclusive since **France** and the **Netherlands** have established traditions of apprenticeship. In **France** this concerns a limited number of occupations including construction trades, printing, breadmaking, butchery, etc. About 15% of pupils in a given age group take this route to skilled worker status. Legislation in the 1980s has extended the range of courses for which apprenticeship contracts are possible, developing a progression route through to higher technician level.

2.4 It is important to note that both approaches, full-time and apprenticeship, included forms of exclusion which discouraged people from improving their qualifications. Traditional apprenticeship has always been aimed at young people straight out of compulsory education. In the **United Kingdom**, until the 1980s, regulations covering apprenticeship stipulated an age limit for signing indentures. Few opportunities existed for unskilled or semi-skilled workers to catch up later on in life.

2.5 The development of such opportunities has been one of the aims in the extension of certification for continuing education and training. Orientation and reforms during the 1980s have tended to aim at achieving a more balanced system by creating new modes of access and removing or lowering barriers.

2.6 Thus the countries with highly school-based, full-time systems are examining or implementing measures to broaden the choice of modes of study. The **Netherlands**, for example, has set out to increase significantly the number of young people qualifying at skilled worker level through apprenticeship training while at the same time examining how technician qualifications could be offered on a similar basis. Since 1987 in **France** it has been possible to sign apprenticeship contracts up to the age of 25 and at several levels of qualification (European levels 2, 3 and 4).

2.7 Equally important in the process of increasing skills levels is the building of clear progression routes from one level to the next allowing personal and professional development throughout a person's working life.

Entry to the course and admission to the exam

2.8 Since this study is about certification procedures and obtaining qualifications, the courses as such are only important in so far as they tend to determine whether or not the trainee/student can pass an examination or be assessed.

2.9 In the case of the vast majority of the qualifications studied, the candidate is obliged to follow the course which prepares him/her for the exam to be taken. The syllabus contains the body of knowledge, skills or competences

which must be learned before the student/trainee is be allowed to enter for the exam.

2.10 Exceptions to this rule are found in the **United Kingdom**, the **Netherlands** and **France** where from a statutory point of view there is no longer any obligation to follow a course before being assessed. In the United Kingdom, National Vocational Qualifications are outcome-based and developed around defined competences which must be demonstrated (preferably in the workplace). These arrangements are too recent for it to be possible to make any evaluation of their efficiency and effectiveness. In **France** recent legislation has created *Centres de Validation* where an individual can be assessed and awarded an officially recognised certificate, or part of one. The relevant legislation also exists in the **Netherlands** but for the moment has not been broadly implemented.

Modes of access

2.12 There are full-time courses leading to skilled worker, technician and higher technician awards in all the EC countries except **Germany** and **Denmark**. In these two countries, as is well documented, all skilled worker qualifications are obtained through the dual system of training. In **Italy** and **Spain** official diplomas can only be prepared through full-time study and this remains generally the case for **Belgium**. Courses take place in secondary schools or similar establishments and are part of the initial education system. Though the same is true in **France** and **Luxembourg** for the two technician levels, both countries offer either a full-time or an apprenticeship route to skilled worker level. Full-time routes to NVQ/SVQ levels 2,3 and 4 in the **United Kingdom** coexist with other modes of study. Irish technician awards are obtained through full-time study.

2.13 In some industrialised countries (though never in the Netherlands), before the systems of school-based technical education were established, apprenticeship with part-time study (day release, block release) was the privileged route to skilled worker status. This is still the case in **Germany** and **Denmark**, and it is part of the training offer in all the Northern European countries. (The case of the **United Kingdom**, where recent legislation and the recession have more or less caused apprenticeship to disappear is an exception though Youth Training combines a similar pattern of in-firm training plus college attendance.) Apprenticeship traditionally covered the trades and crafts of the building industry, engineering, printing and the retail food industry. In the **Netherlands, Denmark, Luxembourg** and **Germany** apprenticeship has been extended to include tertiary sector occupations. As indicated above some systems offer the choice between full-time or alternance routes to skilled worker status. In these cases the award obtained has the same standing whichever route is chosen. **Belgium** is an exception since the full-time route gives an official diploma whereas the certificate obtained by apprenticeship is a certificate of attainment but is not accredited. No apprenticeship routes exist at present in **Spain** but the idea is under discussion. **Greece** is in the process of setting up new apprenticeship awards and in **Portugal** a small number of young people train by this route.

2.14 Part-time study without an apprenticeship or trainee contract usually takes the form of evening classes In the **United Kingdom**, most formal qualifications can be obtained through evening classes. The extensive system of "*promotion sociale*" courses in **Belgium** also allows working people formal access to and offical qualifications via evening study. Similar provision in **Denmark** and **Germany**, through the Folk High Schools, offer the same possibilities. The Portuguese Ministries of Education and Employment both offer evening class routes to national vocational awards.

2.15 It became evident during the 1980s that standard courses which might suit the needs of young people who have just finished compulsory education or full secondary edcuation are usually not at all suited to the needs of working adults. Hence the development of schemes and projects to individualise access to qualifications for adults. This has been done in several ways: via the type of selection used (see below) but also via adaptation of the modes of study. The latter can theoretically include both full-time or part-time study in an institution or open learning with self-study packages, home study and some course attendance.

Among the solutions aimed at offering more flexibility to adult learners are the different types of modularisation. Firstly modularisation can be a way of organising the curriculum so that the students can progress at their own pace taking, for example, one or two modules of a complete qualification per year. This also allows some learners to progress more quickly and not be held back by a structured course all of which has to be followed in a given order. The modules passed are certified and can be carried forward and cumulated until the full number needed for the qualification has been achieved. This latter possibility, linked to the accreditation of prior learning, allows adults with working experience to take only the modules for which they cannot demonstrate skills and/or knowledge attained. Finally, breaking courses down into modules allows students to obtain modules which will be pertinent to more than one qualification, thereby encouraging horizontal movement.

Two other tendencies should be noted here. One is distance learning which is no new phenomenon in itself. In **France**, to give one example, the *Centre National d'Enseignement à Distance* has for a long time allowed people who could not attend courses for whatever reason to follow courses for a wide range of qualifications. Secondly, recent developments in open learning have taken into account the specific needs of adult learners as a

group as well as the more personalised approaches of allowing individuals access to qualifications with individualised learning packages.

Selection criteria

2.16 Most formal qualifications in the countries studied require a certain prior level to be able to follow the appropriate course or to be assessed. The report is interested firstly in criteria applied for entry to Level 2 courses and then for progression to higher levels. In some cases the requirements are compulsory, in others they may be recommendations and finally in a few cases there are no prior requirements.

For entry to the skilled worker level the young person is either required to have attained a certain level at the end of compulsory education, or as is the case in **Denmark** and the Netherlands just to have been through compulsory education. There are no formal requirements to obtain a training place in the German dual system since trainees may be taken on with any of the three secondary school leaving certificates or none. However a training place "market" exists via either selection by firms and guidance by schools or competition among the occupational sectors for students with the different levels of school leaving certificates. This leads to over- and under-subscription depending on occupational sector. The British National Vocational Qualifications are theoretically exempt of any entry requirements except that of being able to benefit from the course. Requirements may be expressed in terms of academic exams or having completed a given number of years successfully. Young people who have not reached the required levels are usually guided towards special schemes.

This situation is similar at each level of award. Access to a **vocational** qualification at Levels 3 and 4 may be conditional on the candidate holding the appropriate **academic** award. The higher technician awards are good

examples of this state of affairs. Thus, in **Spain** *formación profesional 2* courses are more commonly followed by young people who have completed full secondary education than by those who have followed a vocational route and taken the *formación professional 1*. Likewise young people in **France** with a *baccalauréat d'enseignement général* or *technologique*, both of which have a mainly theoretical content, are more likely to be accepted to study for a higher technician award (the *brevet de technicien supérieur*) than those with a *baccalauréat professionnel*. This obviously begs the question of the development of coherent progression routes as well as examination of selection critieria. The former is further dealt with below in Section 3.

2.17 Individualisation of access to awards is developing very slowly and is accepted by the academic establishment with hesitation. As with open learning, this type of development started at higher education level. The examples of Open Universities are well-known. One example of opening up access is that of the United Kingdom during the 1980s, when links were established between further education and higher education institutions to offer personalised packages to adults with few formal qualifications who wanted to gain a higher education award.

2.18 The accreditation of prior learning (APL), which will be the subject of a forthcoming study by Cedefop, has been the subject of experiments for some time in North America where it was first introduced to counteract the demographic downturn; higher education institutions sought to supplement the no longer sufficient numbers of young people by opening access to older people without the traditional qualfications. APL remains limited in its applications in Europe. Provision has been made very recently in **France** for universities to be able to accept students on the basis of their professional experience. The same possibility will shortly exist for VET awards at a lower level but the decrees necessary to enable the legislation to be

implemented are still being drawn up. However, French workers can already have their levels of skills and knowledge evaluated and accredited in the *Centres de Bilan* and the *Centres de Validation* respectively. One immediate application of this provision is the evaluation of competences of young people who have left the educational system with no qualifications. Much development work has been done in the **United Kingdom** to increase access to higher education and to VET qualifications via APL, but the number of people who take awards this way remains small in comparison with standard routes. The Dutch government is currently encouraging such developments especially for the unemployed and for unqualified employees. The Portuguese government is examining the feasibility of setting up an accreditation system to allow certification of skills obtained through work, and in **Ireland** two of the major awarding bodies, FAS and NTCB, are developing such schemes.

Progression routes

2.19 It is worth noting firstly that for academic study progression routes have long existed in all European countries. Thus in all systems those who passed the relevant exams at secondary school entry or at the end of the first cycle of secondary school could go on to complete full secondary edcuation and take the diplomas leading to higher education. One level led logically to the next, as long as the candidates remained within their defined range of subjects. In the field of vocational education and training on the other hand, the provision for progression was limited as was indeed the motivation, the status of skilled worker offering both employment security and status within society.

Vocational qualifications are increasingly expected to serve two purposes: allowing the award holder either to enter the labour market or to go on to a

higher level qualification. It is not easy to achieve the right mix between the practical skills and competences necessary if the certificate is to be of value on the labour market and the theoretical content necessary to allow a subsequent higher level of study. Vocational courses are frequently torn between the two alternatives in trying to achieve balance and credibility. Hence the importance of coherent progression routes designed to lead on from one level to the next.

2.20 In a rapidly changing society it has become almost a platitude to say that it is no longer sufficient to learn one set of skills at the beginning of working life. Techniques and technologies develop continuously and at all levels working people are faced with the need for flexibility and adaptability of their knowledge, competences and skills. Skills updating and re-skilling have become essential parts of the continuing training field to allow firms and the labour force to adapt to change and innovation. Many short courses are available offering add-on skills giving an immediate response to a short-term situation. Other courses enable a fuller skills updating and may lead to accredited qualifications.

2.21 Likewise longer compulsory education leading to higher levels of basic education increase the expectations of young people entering the labour market.

2.22 As indicated above in 3.15, over recent years it has become increasingly evident that most European VET did not offer enough progression routes to the first level award holders. This issue is being addressed and we have summarised below the state of affairs in the Member States.

Belgium: The *Promotion sociale* courses allow progression through accredited awards. Unfortunately most of these are academic and many VET awards are not accredited.

Denmark: Automatic recognition of qualifications by the different ministries involved allows passage from one award to another. Extensive modularisation of courses organised by the *AMU* (the labour market agency of the Ministry of Employment) means that qualifications can be built up unit by unit through a series of short courses.

France: The "blockages" in the French system have been recognised and, during the 1980s, measures were introduced to create more bridges from one level of vocational award to another. The introduction of the *baccalauréat professionnel* was a major step in establishing a progession route for young people who had taken a European Level 2 craft award, the *CAP* or *BEP*. Another was the provision for signing a succession of apprenticeship contracts in order to move through Levels 2, 3 and 4. In the field of CET, AFPA qualifications followed well-charted routes but only for a limited number of occupational areas. Progression for adults who have left the system is being opened up by increasing modularisation for accredited or national awards. In addition recent measures are aimed at establishing the possibility of accreditation of prior learning for university entrance and even at modularising the *baccalauréat*.

Germany: One of the reasons for the success of the apprenticeship system has been that it led into technical training, albeit through full-time courses and a substantial proportion of dual system award holders go on to university or *Fachhochschule* courses. It should nevertheless be pointed out that during the 1980s the number of young people following an apprenticeship after obtaining the *Abitur* (university entrance diploma) increased considerably. The first

agreements on specific parity of esteem for vocational and academic awards were made in 1992. Young people who enter the dual system with a *Hauptschule* diploma, or without any school leaving certificate, will automatically be credited with a *Realschule* diploma if they pass their apprenticeship exams. This will then open up more possibilities of further training for them.

Greece: Reforms in progress in Greece are taking on board the need for progression routes and building them into new schemes along with modularisation of courses. The new institutes, *IEK*, will offer modularised courses at European Levels 1, 2 and 3, based on a unified approach to assessment.

Ireland: Clear progression routes have been lacking in the system. Recent proposals by the National Council for Vocational Awards are to create a grid system of attainment making it possible for people to pass both vertically and horizontally. In addition the current reforms of apprenticeship take into account the need for progression. The FAS certification framework facilitates progression from one level to the next based on evidence of attainment, and a modularised approach provides for different levels of achievement within a common programme.

Italy: Though the framework of national diplomas has not been amended, developments at regional level are taking into account the need for progression and movement through the system by modularising courses. Depending on the course, trainees can in some cases take national awards while in others they will follow courses accredited by the regions themselves. Finally, enterprise-recognised awards play a significant role in the regionally organised training courses.

Luxembourg: Recent legislation on technical education has established parity of esteem between the academic secondary leaving certificate and the technical secondary leaving certificate. It creates a new progression route allowing craft award holders (the *CATP*) to continue in technical upper secondary education.

Netherlands: The Dutch system proposes full-time provision as well as apprenticeship and part-time routes. Theoretical progression routes from general and vocational secondary education at all levels through further or higher education are well mapped. However, the major problem for the Netherlands would appear to be that too many young people do not complete courses undertaken.

Portugal: The problem in the Portuguese system during the 1980s was to provide basic vocational training for large numbers of people and adapt the system to young people who had stayed in general education much longer than previous generations.

Spain: Recent legislation in Spain aims to provide better routes through the system. New technician and higher technician awards should become available through distance learning. However since all awards at semi-skilled worker level will remain outside the official accreditation system, and since the first level of vocational training (the *formación professional 1*) is due to disappear, some difficulties in passing from skilled worker to technician level are to be expected.

United Kingdom: The aim of NCVQ is to create a grid system which will allow bridges to be crossed between different qualifications and levels. In fact theoretical possibilities for progression from one level to the next have long been quite good, with clear progression routes offered by the main awarding bodies. In practice though flexibility might be hindered by the course content, e.g. a maths level too low to allow progression from level X to level Y. (This type of blockage is very similar to what happens in France). In addition the

academic awards at the end of secondary education continue to dominate higher education entry, with each institution accepting candidates with non-typical or vocationally oriented qualifications (the most common being the BTEC National Diploma) on an individual basis. Modularisation of all post-16 courses in Scotland has allowed greatly increased flexibility and opened up new types of progression.

3. CERTIFICATION

Organising principles

3.1 There are four main approaches to the organisation of assessment within the national systems in the 12 Member States:

- central elaboration and delivery;
- decentralised elaboration and delivery;
- mixed approach;
- central guidelines and quality control with local delivery.

It is important to note that each of these different approaches each guarantee the outcome, i.e. a nationally accredited and valid diploma or certificate.

3.2 **France, Italy, Greece** and **Luxembourg** adopt a predominantly centralised approach whereby the examinations for VET awards are designed under the responsibility of the Ministry of Education for the most part, but also by other competent ministries. Examinations are anonymous and teachers never mark the papers of their own students. There is of course some variety within these systems, for example the regionally organised and controlled courses in **Italy** and the new awards in **France** accredited by the social partners via the *Commissions paritaires de l'emploi* for the occupational sector.

3.3 The decentralised systems do not all present the same characteristics. In **Germany** the principle that the person who teaches also examines is firmly anchored in practice. Each *Land* is mandated by federal government to organise examinations within their schools, but it is the schools themselves which set up the examination panels and carry out assessment. For the

craft side of vocational training, the competent bodies (e.g. Chambers of Industry and Commerce and of Crafts) are mandated to organise and deliver the examinations. The Portuguese system on the other hand gives a general mandate to schools to set and deliver all examinations within the school-based system. For the craft certificates, however, the Ministry of Employment's training and employment agency, the *IEFP*, nominates members of the examinations panels in consultation with the regional authorities.

The situations in **Ireland** and the **United Kingdom** are somewhat different due to the presence of the awarding bodies. Awarding bodies guarantee the quality of the assessment on which the award is based, either by setting and marking examinations or by overseeing the assessment undertaken at local level. Whereas in **Ireland** the major certification boards are mandated by a government department to assess and confer diplomas and awards, in the **United Kingdom** some of the boards, such as City and Guilds of London Institute and the Royal Society of Arts, are long-established private bodies whose awards nevertheless have full national recognition.

3.4 The **Netherlands** presents a mixed pattern with awards being obtained through either central and/or college examinations, depending on the diploma. Central examinations are under the responsibility of the Ministry of Education but the national vocational boards (*LOBs*) are consulted.

3.5 The final pattern involves elaboration of guidelines and objectives at national level with implementation at regional or local level. In **Belgium** this means that the Ministries of Education of the three linguistic Communities guarantee procedures and quality but leave the actual examining and conferring of awards to the schools which set up their own examination panels. While the delivery of the assessment is also carried out by the

schools in **Spain** the elaboration is the work of the *Junta de Evaluación* established by the Ministry of Education. Finally in **Denmark**, though the Ministry responsible determines what should be examined for the theoretical part of the assessment, and the Trade Councils for the skill content, it is the colleges which actually devise the papers and carry out the assessment with some moderation by peer institutions.

Examinations and examiners

Establishing the content

3.6 The content of the examinations is largely determined by the aims and curriculum of the qualification and therefore by the body which makes the decisions about them. Where the initial procedures establishing awards are centralised under ministerial control, so are those concerning assessment. Decentralised decision making usually extends right down to assessment.

3.7 It should however be noted that the body or agency holding ultimate legal responsibility for the qualification does not necessarily also control the examination procedures.

3.8 In France the *Commissions professionnelles consultatives*, which advise the Ministry of Education on the objectives and curriculum content of national vocational awards (*diplômes d'état*), also fix the type and content of the examinations. The final decision remains that of the Ministry, as is also the case in **Italy**, **Spain** and **Luxembourg** and the **Netherlands**, whereas in **Belgium** the Ministries of Education of the three Communities guarantee the quality of the assessment by setting down guidelines but do not stipulate precise content.

3.9 The Danish model is not, in theory, very different from the French one in so far as legal responsibility lies with the ministry but advice is taken from the social partners via the Vocational Education Councils and National Trade Committees. However in **Denmark** the process is not merely consulatative; the advice given must be taken. The social partners are also involved in examinations for the apprentice certificates in **Luxembourg**. No doubt **Germany** is the country in which they play the most extensive role since the competent bodies (usually Chambers of Industry and Commerce and of Crafts) hold total responsibility for examinations of the on-the-job part of apprentice training. They also certify further training for skilled workers holding the *Facharbeiter* qualification.

3.10 In all the above countries, though this pattern holds for the official state diplomas, decision making is more varied for awards outside the formal structure. There are generally no official procedures laid down for attendance or attainment certificates except in **Italy** where they are guaranteed by the regional authorities.

3.11 A variety of agencies and bodies determine the content of the assessment in **Ireland** and the **United Kingdom**. As NVQs become established in the **United Kingdom** the role of the Lead Bodies increases in that they can stipulate the assessment methods when establishing standards of competence. For other awards, it is essentially the awarding body which either determines content and methods or moderates college-based examinations. In **Ireland** there is also a range of awarding bodies depending on the type of qualification but each is mandated by the appropriate ministry to carry out assessment.

The Assessments

A broad variety of solutions have been adopted for the assessment of vocational education and training qualifications. For courses which take place

mainly in schools or colleges - what is termed school-based learning - the assessment will be organised by the appropriate authority responsible for these institutions, in most countries the Ministry of Education. Different approaches to the assessment have nevertheless been adopted. For apprenticeship courses and some alternance training, a significant part of the training occurs in the workplace - what is termed workplace learning - and the representatives of the social partners will thus usually be involved in the assessment process. In some cases the trainee will be examined in the workplace (workplace-based assessment) by a practical or skills test, in others this test will take place in the school or college. (See **Diagram 1** for the actors involved in assessment at the three levels and **Diagram 2**, the position of assessment and evaluation in the system flow with the actors and sub-processes involved.)

3.12 Examinations in some cases are written centrally and taken by all candidates on the same day as is the case for French national diplomas. They may however be organised and carried out in the schools, as in Belgium, the central authorities guaranteeing the quality by accreditation. The type of exam does not fundamentally affect the status of the award. Even within the same country a variety of solutions can coexist. Whereas the craft examinations in the **United Kingdom** (City and Guild of London Institute) are centrally written, the technician awards (BTEC National and Higher National Diplomas) are college-based assessments moderated by the awarding body.

3.13 Frequently centrally-devised examinations take the traditional form of written, knowledge-based papers accompanied, mainly at craft level, by practical skills tests. The concern behind this type of organisation is usually to maintain standards, equity and the fairness of anonymity.

3.14 Innovation in examination procedures tends to be limited either to decentralised decision-making stuctures where variety is not considered to

be the enemy of standards, or to labour market linked training for young people with low qualifications and the unemployed. Another common area of experimentation has been continuing education and training where formal qualifications are not always on offer. Projects, written assignments, practical assignments, workplace-based assessment, work simulation, etc. introduces criteria and practices which can less easily be standardised.

3.15 Traditional attitudes and practice are the main determining factor. In the countries where the norm is school-based VET under Ministry of Education control, assessment practice favours centrally devised and corrected examinations. At the opposite end of the spectrum is **Germany** where the 83 Chambers of Industry and Commerce and of Crafts each devise and carry out their own examinations under mandate from federal government. Some take the form of a written paper, some are multi-choice but there can be no questionning of the validity of the award from one *Land* to another since quality is assured by the principle of peer group evaluation (i.e. all the examiners have themselves been through the system).

3. The certificates

3.16 Three tables are presented below to summarise the certification process at each of the levels taken into account: European Levels 2 (skilled worker), 3 (technician) and 4 (higher technician). The levels are of course an indication made to permit comparison and imply no value judgment on any particular award. They show approximate equivalent levels, bearing in mind that only a very detailed analysis of curricula would allow precise comparison. The awards listed bring together the awards organised by type in the **Overview of Vocational Education and Training Qualifications in the European Community** presented in **Appendix I**.

Each table presents certain types of information country by country for all awards available at the particular level. The mode of acquisition, that is whether the qualificaiton is obtained through full-time study, apprenticeship, etc., is given. In some cases there is only one; in others the same award is available through different routes. The type of diploma or certificate (national award, regional award, etc.) is indicated along with the level of responsibility for its validation or accreditation. Some detail has been given on the organisation of the assessment to demonstrate that awards of national value may be assessed in very different ways. Finally an attempt has been made to estimate the average age at which trainees would be likely to obtain the awards.

TABLE 1 - LEVEL 2 : TYPE OF AWARD BY MODE OF ACQUISITION, LEVEL OF RESPONSIBILITY AND ORGANISATION OF ASSESSMENT

COUNTRY	NAME OF AWARD	MODE OF ACQUISITION	TYPE OF DIPLOMA OR CERTIFICATE	LEVEL OF RESPONSIBILITY	ORGANISATION OF ASSESSMENT	USUAL AGE FOR OBTAINING AWARD
BELGIUM	*Certificat de qualification 5e/6e/7e*	full-time	national accredited diploma (according to status of school)	*Ministère de l'Enseignement* of each Community	The *Ministères de l'Enseignement* guarantee the procedures and quality of the assessment. The examination panels are set up by the schools which also confer the awards	16 - 19
	Certificat d'apprentissage des Classes Moyennes	apprenticeship	accredited diploma or certificate of attendance	*Ministère de l'Enseignement* of each Community or training centre	Training centres are responsable for assessment if the certificate is not accredited	18 - 19
	Certificat d'apprentissage industriel	apprenticeship	certificate of attendance	training centre		18 - 19
DENMARK	Basic vocational training awards	apprenticeship	national diploma	overall responsibility: Ministry of Education (or Ministry of Industry for maritime training and National Trade Councils for the trade expertise	The Ministry responsible determines what will be examined. The colleges devise the exam papers and carry out assessment. Some external examiners for control purposes. The Trade Council defines the skill content	18 - 21 (also via adult education)
FRANCE	*Certificat d'aptitude professionnelle (CAP)* *Brevet d'enseignement professionnel (BEP)*	full-time or apprenticeship	national diploma	*Ministère de l'Education nationale*	Ministry establishes requirements for passing exam. Papers devised and timetable established by regional offices *(Rectorat)*. Also nominate exam panels. Externally examined. Award conferred by *Rectorat*.	18 - 20
	Certificat d'aptitude professionnelle de l'agriculture (CAPA)	full-time or apprenticeship	national diploma	*Ministère de l'Agriculture*	Exam panel nominated by Ministry who agree on content of exams. Centre sets timetable, paper and corrects. Award conferred by Ministry.	18 - 20
	Certificat de formation professionnelle (CFP) *Certificat de perfectionnement professionnel (CPP)*	full-time	accredited awards	Prime Minister's Office/*Ministère du Travail*	Under the responsibility of various ministries. Panels nominated at regional or local level. Exam carried out in school or centre. Marked externaliy. Award conferred by regional office of relevant Ministry.	18 +

TABLE 1 - (CONT.)

FRANCE (cont.)	other awards	full-time or alternance	national diplomas, accredited awards or others	*Ministères du Commerce et de l'Artisanat, de la Santé, de la Jeunesse et des Sports, de la Défense, de la Mer*		18 +
	Certificat de qualification	alternance	*certificat de qualification professionnelle* or accredited award	*Commission paritaire de l'emploi de la branche professionnelle*	Training centre devises and carries out exams.	18 +
GERMANY	*Facharbeiterbrief* (industry) *Gesellen brief* (crafts) *Gehilfe brief* (tertiary sector)	apprenticeship	nationally recognised diploma	The Ministry of Education of each *Land* for the school-based part and the Chamber of Industry and Commerce or of Crafts or the competent body for the firm-based part	The Ministry of Education for each *Land* has overall responsibility for the school-based part. Exams set and carried out in school by teachers. The Chambers of Industry and Comerce or of Crafts or the competent body examines the firm-based part.	19 +
GREECE	*Technikes Epangelmatikes Scholes*	full-time	national diploma *(Ptychion)*	Ministry of Education	Guidelines established by the Pedagogical Institute under the Ministry of Education.	18
	Meses Technikes Nosileftikes Scholes (Health)	alternance	national diploma	Ministry of Education and Ministry of Health	Exam paper devised and delivered by schools. Award conferred by school	18
	Scholes Touristikon Epangelmaton	alternance	national diploma	Ministry of Education and Ministry of National Economy		18
	OAED-Scholes Mathitias or Kentra Technikis Epangelmatikis Katartisis	apprenticeship	national diploma	Ministry of Labour		18
	OEEK-IEK Apprenticeship Certificate (in planning stages only)	full-time	national diploma	Ministry of Education		18
IRELAND	Vocational Preparation Training 2 Programmes	apprenticeship	national training qualification	Joint FAS/Department of Enterprise and Employment	No standard approach. Exams can be externally or internally set.	16 +
	National Craft Certificate Craft Certificate in Tourism and Catering	apprenticeship	national training qualification	Teagasc	Exams devised by FAS or NTCB. Carried out and marked in training centre. Award conferred by FAS or NTCB.	16 - 20
	Joint FAS/C&G Certificates	apprenticeship	national training qualification	NTCB/CERT	FAS devises exams. Carried out in training centre. Joint accreditation by FAS and C&G.	mainly 18 - 35 but all ages included
	Farm Apprenticeship Scheme Certificate in Farming				Exams devised by Teagasc. Carried out and marked in training centre. Award conferred by Teagasc.	18 - 25

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TABLE 1 - (CONT.)

ITALY	*diploma di qualifica*	full-time (school)	national diploma	Ministry of Education	Exam panel nominated by head	16 - 17
	attesto di idoneità qualifica professionale	full-time (regional centres)	*attestato regionale e nazionale*	Ministry of Employment and the Regions	teacher. Exams carried out and marked in school. Award conferred by Ministry of Education	16 - 17
	certificato di qualifica professionale (settore artigianato)	alternance (enterprise-based)	*certificato regionale*	Ministry of Employment and the Regions or Autonomous Provinces	Same regulations for regionally organised awards but panel includes representatives of ministries and social partners.	15 - 20
LUXEMBOURG	*Certificat d'aptitude technique et professionnelle (CATP)*	full-time or apprenticeship	national diploma	Ministry of Education and the *Chambres professionnelles*	National exams. Marked under supervision of exam panel. Award conferred by Ministry of Education and the Chambers.	18 - 20
NETHERLANDS	*Kort Middelbaar beroepsonderwijs (KMBO)*	full-time	national diploma	Ministry of Education	Examinations devised and delivered by the colleges. Award conferred by school on behalf of Ministry of Education	17 - 18 - 19
	Primair/Secundair Leerlingwezen	apprenticeship	national diploma	Ministry of Education	Centrally set examinations. Administered by a Ministry of Education appointed board in consultation with the relevant national body *(LOB)*. Also college examinations. Award conferred by school on behalf of Ministry of Education and the *LOB*.	17 - 18 - 19
PORTUGAL	*Certificadao d'aptidão profissional*	full-time or evening classes	nationally recognised award	Ministry of Employment (by *IEFP*)	All examinations devised and delivered within the teaching institutions by teachers and examination panels. For *Certificado d'aptidão* panels are nominated by *IEFP* in consultation	17 - 18
	ensino profissional	part-time	national award	Ministry of Education	with Regions and Ministry of	17 - 18
	Certificate of apprenticeship	apprenticeship	nationally recognised award	Ministry of Employment (by *IEFP*)	Employment. Awards conferred by the Ministry of Education or the	17 - 18
	Escolas profissionais	full-time or evening classes	national award	Ministry of Education	*IEFP*.	17 - 18

TABLE 1 - (CONT.)

SPAIN	*Titulo de formación profesional (FP1): Técnico Auxiliar*	full-time	national diploma	Ministry of Education and Science	Exams devised centrally by the *Junta de Evaluación* but delivered and marked by an examination panel set up by the school. Awards conferred by the Ministry of Education	17 - 18
	Certificados Profesionalidad (parciales) Diplomas	full-time, alternance or part-time	certificate of competence	Ministry of Employment *(INEM)* and other organisations (universities, public and private organisations)	Under the responsibility of *INEM*, delivered and marked by training centres. Awards conferred by *INEM*	16 +
UNITED KINGDOM	NVQ Level 2/3 SVQ Level 2/3 GNVQ Level 2 gSVQ Level 2	All modes of acquisition are possible but some more usual for some qualifications	national vocational qualifications	accreditation by NCVQ (England and Wales and N. Ireland) and SCOTVEC (Scotland)	City and Guilds and RSA examinations devised and delivered centrally by each board. Award conferred by each Board.	
	also City and Guilds Craft Certificate RSA Certificate BTEC 1st Diploma		awards of examining and validating bodies	relevant awarding body	BTEC issues guidelines and moderates. Examinations devised and delivered by the teaching institution which confers award. Same for SCOTVEC	17 - 18 and over

TABLE 2 - LEVEL 3 : TYPE OF AWARD BY MODE OF ACQUISITION, LEVEL OF RESPONSIBILITY AND ORGANISATION OF ASSESSMENT

COUNTRY	NAME OF AWARD	MODE OF ACQUISITION	TYPE OF DIPLOMA OR CERTIFICATE	LEVEL OF RESPONSIBILITY	ORGANISATION OF ASSESSMENT	USUAL AGE FOR OBTAINING AWARD
BELGIUM	*CESS Technique*	full-time	national diploma or accredited award	*Ministère de l'Enseignement* of each Community	The *Ministères de l'Enseignement* guarantee the procedures and quality of the assessment. Examination panels set up by the schools which also confer the awards	18 - 20
DENMARK	*Hojere Handels examen* *Hojere Teknisk Examen*	full-time school	national diploma	Ministry of Education	The Ministry determines what will be examined. The schools and colleges devise exams and carry out assessment with some external control.	18 +
	Technician Awards	full-time further education	national diploma	Ministry of Education and National Trade Councils	The Trade Councils determine trade content	18 +
FRANCE	*Baccalauréat technologique*	full-time	national diploma	*Ministère de l'Education Nationale*	Ministry establishes requirements for passing exam. Papers devised	17 - 20
	Baccalauréat professionnel	full-time or apprenticeship	national diploma	*Ministère de l'Education Nationale*	and timetable established by regional offices *(Rectorat)*. Also	17 - 20
	Brevet de technicien	full-time	national diploma	*Ministère de l'Education Nationale*	nominate exam panels. Externally examined. Award conferred by *Rectorat*.	17 - 20
	Brevet de technicien de l'Agriculture	full-time or apprenticeship	national diploma	*Ministère de l'Agriculture*	Exam panel nominated by Ministry who agree on content of exams. Centre sets timetable, paper and corrects. Award conferred by Ministry.	17 - 20
	other awards	full-time or alternance	national diplomas or accredited awards	Prime Minister's Office	Under the responsibility of various ministries. Panels nominated at regional or local level. Exam carried out in school or centre. Marked externally. Award conferred by regional office of relevant Ministry.	17 - 20

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TABLE 2 - (CONT.)

GERMANY	*Fachschuldiplom*: State-certified technician	full-time or part-time	national award	Federal Government (Standing Conference of Ministers of Education and Cultural Affairs)	Examinations set and delivered by the teaching institution	20 +
	Mastercraftsman	part-time	national award	competent bodies (eg. Chambers of Industry and Commerce and of Crafts)	Examinations set and delivered by the competent bodies	20 +
GREECE	*Technika Epangelmatika Lykia*	full-time	national diploma *(Ptychion)*	Ministry of Education	Guidelines established by the Pedagogical Institute under the Ministry of Education.	18 - 19
	EPL - Certificate of Integral Multidiscipline Lyceum	full-time	national diploma	Ministry of Education	Exam paper devised and delivered by schools. Award conferred by school	18 - 19
	Merchant Navy Lyceum Certificate *(Naftika Lykia)*	full-time	national diploma	Ministry of Education and Ministry of Merchant Marine		18 - 19
	OEEK-IEK Apprenticeship Certificate (in planning stages only)	full-time	national diploma	Ministry of Education		18 - 19
IRELAND	National Council for Educational Awards-National Certificate	full-time	national vocational award	National Council for Educational Awards	Assessment devised and delivered by the Regional Technical Colleges and Colleges of Technology	usually 18 - 25
	City and Guilds Advanced Craft Certificate	apprenticeship	recognised award	City and Guilds of London Institute	The CGLI sets and marks the exam	
ITALY	*Maturità e/o abilitazione professionale*	full-time	national diploma	Ministry of Education	National exam panel. Exams devised centrally for all country. Marking centrally supervised. Award conferred by Ministry of Education	18 - 19
LUXEMBOURG	*Diplôme de fin d'études secondaires techniques* *Diplôme de technicien*	full-time	national diploma	Ministry of Education	Exams set and delivered nationally. Award conferred by Ministry of Education.	18 - 19
NETHERLANDS	*Middelbaar beroepsonderwijs (MBO)*	full-time or part-time	national diploma	Ministry of Education	College and central examinations. Award conferred by school on behalf of Ministry of Education	18 +
	Apprenticeship (Secondary/Tertiary levels)	apprenticeship	national diploma	Ministry of Education	Central examinations devised by Central Examining Board in consultation with *LOBs*. Award conferred by school on behalf of Ministry of Education and *LOB*	18 +

TABLE 2 - (CONT.)

PORTUGAL	*Ensino secundario técnico-profissional*	full-time	national diploma	Ministry of Education	Examinations set and delivered by the schools. Awards conferred by the Ministry of Education.	16 - 19
	ensino profissional	full-time or evening classes	national diploma	Ministry of Education		18 +
	technician apprenticeship certificates	apprenticeship	national diploma	Ministry of Employment (by *IEFP*)	Examinations set and delivered by schools with representatives of industry on panels. Awards conferred by the *IEFP*.	16 - 19
SPAIN	*Titulo de Técnico CF-2 (grado medio)*	full-time	national diploma	Ministry of Education and Science	Exams devised centrally by the *Junta de Evaluación* but delivered and marked by examination panel set up by school. Awards conferred by the Ministry of Education.	18 - 19
	Titulo de Técnico especialista					
	Certificados de Profesionalidad (parciales)	full-time, alternance or part-time	certificate of competence	Ministry of Employment *(INEM)* and other bodies (universities, public and private organisations)	Responsability of the teaching institution. Awards conferred by *INEM* or institution responsible.	18 +
	Diplomas					
UNITED KINGDOM	NVQ Level 3/4	All modes of acquisition possible but some are more usual for some qualifications	national vocational qualifications	accreditation by NCVQ (England, Wales and N. Ireland) and SCOTVEC (Scotland)	Examinations set and delivered according to the practice of the individual awarding body which awards its own certificates and diplomas accredited by NCVQ.	18 +
	SVQ Level 3/4					
	GNVQ Level 3					
	gSVQ Level 3					
	BTEC National Certificates and Diplomas		awards of examining and validating bodies	relevant awarding body	BTEC and SCOTVEC issue guidelines and moderate.	18 +
	SCOTVEC National Certificates and Diplomas				Examinations devised and delivered by teaching institution which confers the award.	

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TABLE 3 - LEVEL 4 : TYPE OF AWARD BY MODE OF ACQUISITION, LEVEL OF RESPONSIBILITY AND ORGANISATION OF ASSESSMENT

COUNTRY	NAME OF AWARD	MODE OF ACQUISITION	TYPE OF DIPLOMA OR CERTIFICATE	LEVEL OF RESPONSIBILITY	ORGANISATION OF ASSESSMENT	USUAL AGE FOR OBTAINING AWARD
BELGIUM	*Graduat* of short higher education	full-time	national diploma	*Ministère de l'Enseignement* of each Community	Set and delivered by the teaching institution	21 - 22
DENMARK	awards of the Advanced Technical Training Schemes	full-time	national diplomas	Ministry of Education	College sets and delivers the assessment	20 +
FRANCE	*Brevet de technicien supérieur*	full-time or apprenticeship	national diploma	*Ministère de l'Education Nationale*	Ministry establishes requirements for passing exam. Papers devised and timetable established by regional offices *(Rectorat)*. Also nominate exam panels. Externally examined. Award conferred by *Rectorat.*	21 - 22
	Brevet de technicien supérieur de l'Agriculture	full-time or apprenticeship	national diploma	*Ministère de l'Agriculture*	Exam panel nominated by Ministry who agree on content of exams. Centre sets timetable, paper and corrects. Award conferred by Ministry.	21 - 22
	Diplôme universitaire de technologie	full-time or modularised	national diploma	*Ministère de l'Education Nationale*	Students examined by continuous assessment and work placement report. Internally examined by the teachers. University confers the award.	21 - 22
	other awards	full-time or alternance	national diplomas or accredited awards	relevant Ministry or Prime Minister's Office	Under the responsibility of various ministries. Panels nominated at regional or local level. Exam carried out in school or centre. Marked externally. Award conferred by regional office of relevant Ministry.	21 - 22
GERMANY	*Assistenten Ausbildung (Berlin and Baden-Würtemberg)*	full-time	national award	*Länder* Ministries of Education	Examinations set, delivered and marked in the colleges.	19-22
	Abschlußzeugnis or *Diplomzeugnis* from *Berufsakademie*	part-time	national award (with status of state examination)	*Länder* Government	Examinations set and delivered in teaching institution. Awards conferred by the institutions on behalf of the Ministry of Education of the *Land.*	20 +

TABLE 3 - (CONT.)

GREECE	*Anoteres Scholes Emporikon Naftikon* (Merchant Navy)	alternance	national diploma	Ministry of Merchant Marine	Examinations devised and delivered by the teaching institutions, which also confer and validate the award	20 +
	Anotera Scholi Touristikon Epangelmaton	alternance	national diploma	Ministry of National Economy	Examinations devised and delivered by the teaching institution. Award conferred by the School of Tourism Occupations (for the Greek Tourist Organisation)	20 +
IRELAND	National Council for Educational Awards-Technician Diploma	full-time	national vocational award	National Council for Educational Awards	Assessment devised and delivered by the Regional Technical Colleges and Colleges of Technology	20 +
	awards of certain professional bodies	part-time	professional award	the relevant professional body	Devised by each professional body	20 +
ITALY	*Diploma universitario di primo nivello*	full-time	national diploma	Ministry of Education	Examination panel set up by the university. Set and marked internally. Award conferred by University	20 - 22
LUXEMBOURG	*Diplôme d'ingénieur technicien*	full-time	national diploma	Ministry of Education	Nationally organised final exam marked by school. Award conferred by Ministry of Education	21 - 22
	Brevet de technicien supérieur	full-time or part-time	national diploma	Ministry of Education	Continuous assessment carried out and marked in the Institutes. Award conferred by Ministry of Education.	21 - 22
NETHERLANDS	*Hoger Beroeps onderwijs* (4 year course)	full-time or part-time	national diploma	Ministry of Education	Set and delivered by the colleges. Award conferred by college on behalf of Ministry of Education	22 - 23
	Apprenticeship (Tertiary level)	apprenticeship	national diploma	Ministry of Education	Centrally set examinations administered by a Ministry of Education appointed board in consultation with the relevant national body *(LOB)*: also College examinations. Award conferred by school on behalf of Ministry of Education and *LOB*.	22 - 23

TABLE 3 - (CONT.)

PORTUGAL	awards of the *ensino profissional*	full-time or part-time	national diploma	Ministry of Education	Examinations set and delivered by the schools. Awards conferred by the Ministry of Education.	20 +
SPAIN	*Titulo de Técnico superior CF-3*	full-time	national diploma	Ministry of Education and Science	Examinations devised centrally by the *Junta de Evaluación* but delivered and marked by panel set up by school. Awards conferred by the Ministry of Education.	20 - 21
	Certificados de profesionalidad (parciales) *Diplomas*	full-time or alternance part-time	certificates of competence	Ministry of Employment *(INEM)* and other bodies (universities, public and private organisations)	Responsibility of the teaching institution. Awards conferred by *INEM* or the institution responsible.	20 - 21
UNITED KINGDOM	NVQ Level 4 SVQ Level 4	All modes of acquisition possible but some more usual for some qualifications	national vocational awards	accredited by National Council for Vocational Qualifications	Examinations set and delivered according to the practice of the individual awarding body which awards its own certificates and diplomas accredited by NCVQ	20 +
	BTEC Higher National Diploma/Certificate SCOTVEC Higher National Diploma/Certificate		awards of the bodies concerned	validated by the awarding body	BTEC and SCOTVEC issue guidelines and moderate. Examinations devised and delivered by teaching institution which confers the award.	20 +
	Awards of some professional bodies		awards of the bodies concerned	awarded by the relevant professional body	Devised by each professional body	20 +

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4. TRENDS AND RECENT DEVELOPMENTS

4.1 Systems of vocational education and training, and therefore the accompanying systems and procedures of certification are not static but involve a dynamic series of relationships (as shown in the diagrams in the **Introduction**), which change and develop according to perspectives and the needs of societies. The 1980s was a period of considerable change in many of the EC countries. Reforms have been initiated from different starting points but have in fact often worked towards similar goals.

These goals can be summarised as follows:

- increasing the overall proportion of the working population with recognised qualifications;
- increasing the number of qualified young people entering the labour market and their level of qualification;
- improving access to education and training courses and to qualifications for unemployed adults;
- developing VET qualifications which respond to the double objective of:
  - enhancing the individual's personal development and ensuring a firm base on which further learning can continue, and
  - satisfying labour market needs;
- involving the social partners through suitable structures in the processes of elaborating and implementing VET qualifications.

4.2 Three of the Southern European countries in which the VET systems were not well developed have introduced reforms to strengthen and standardise training. In **Portugal** and **Spain** the respective ministries of Employment

through their employment and training agencies, have played an important role in developing the country-wide offer of training. Current reforms in **Spain** are establishing a higher technician award in order to provide a progression route for technician education through from secondary education to short higher education. In **Portugal** emphasis is being placed on extending the offer of courses giving national awards to a wider public. The third country of Southern Europe in which a VET system is being further developed is **Greece** where new courses will provide standardised training at all levels. For the first time the social partners are being officially involved in the process. In all of these countries the main aims are to increase the number of trained people on the labour market, improve the quantity and quality of VET provision for young people completing compulsory education and extend the provision available to adults.

4.3 Preoccupations are not disimilar in some of the Northern European countries. As economic and technological change in the 1980s altered the parameters of the labour market, they have been forced to renew and rethink their VET provison; both the structures and frameworks as well as in curriculum terms. The development of coherent progression routes for technicians and from skilled worker level have been significant in recent **French** policies. The same preocupation is behind the fundamental reform processes in the **United Kingdom** and **Ireland**, which are reshaping VET provision and certification. It is intended that one result will be a better trained workforce and fewer barriers to qualifications for young people and adults alike. The issue in these countries has not just been one of creating new specialisms but also of rationalising and updating existing provision, even eliminating courses which no longer ensure either labour market entry or further training. Though in the **Netherlands** the basic system has not been modified, there has been a process of rationalisation and extending provision to an adult public. Likewise training provision in **Denmark** has had

to take into account, though more recently, the reality of unemployed adults needing retraining.

4.4 The broadening of the provision in **Italy** has come essentially through the regionally organised courses which provide training for a broad range of publics - from young people leaving school with no qualifications to managerial staff updating skills. As in all of the above countries, emphasis is on increasing access, even though the means chosen may be different.

4.5 The three countries which have perhaps undertaken the fewest reforms over recent years are **Luxembourg**, **Germany** and **Belgium**. Luxembourg is typical of a small, highly centralised system in which developments have taken into account the need for parity of esteem between technical and vocational courses and general education. Stability, and extensive provision at skilled worker level through the dual system, have been the major characteristics of the **German** system for many years. Substantial changes have of course been made to the curriculum with the development of new specialisms and elimination of out-dated courses. Arrival on the the labour market was facilitated by a well-developed training structure and sufficient places. Thus comparatively few young people dropped out of the system at the end of compulsory education. However in recent years the mismatch between training places available and demand, which varies considerably according to the occupational sector, is affecting the training place market. In addition the demand for training from the population in the new *Länder* of the former East Germany is substantial and for the moment not satisfied. Finally in **Belgium**, where large numbers of young people follow courses, the proportion achieving certification is not always sufficient. In addition it appears that in the coming years the linguistic Communities could increasingly go their separate ways creating difficulties for young people seeking vocational education and training places.

4.6 Working towards the objectives outlined above necessitates a range of measures to suit different needs. Some of them have already been referred to in Chapter II and this section pulls together the types of measures enacted to increase participation and qualification levels. Modularisation of courses, coherent progression routes, accreditation of prior learning and provision for open-learning are all part of packages designed with these purposes in mind. Some of the developments in these areas will be summarised below. Most of them are at early stages of implementation or, depending on the country, still in the developmental stages .

4.7 **Modularisation** has several objectives (already discussed above in Chapter II). It is one outcome of a trend towards mass higher education and can affect curriculum organisation and the accreditation of the individual. Modularised courses facilitate access for working people, allowing them to obtain a qualification at a slower rate than full-time students. Each module is accredited and the qualification is awarded when the full number have been obtained. In the same way increased flexibility allows students to proceed at their own speed without being obliged to complete a fixed number of courses each semester. Equally it allows better horizontal movement in so far as students can take common modules which lead on to several different specialisms.

Modularisation is gradually being introduced for some courses in many countries though it is interesting to note a strong resistance to it in **Germany** where much emphasis is placed on the duration of a course which allows the trainee time to mature. It is felt that if they can accelerate the acquisition of qualifications, though they may well possess the necessary knowledge and competences, they will not have had time to develop the requisite attitudes. Considerable progress has been made in recent years in **France** in making certain courses available to new publics through modularisation courses with credit accumulation. Continuing

education and training has been affected by these developments more than the initial sector. Currently all VET qualifications from European Level 2 to Level 4 can be acquired in this fashion. **Ireland** and the **United Kingdom** are aiming at fully modularised structures of VET awards in the coming years. Such a structure already exists in **Scotland** where all VET awards for young people and adults are organised in this way allowing students to combine academic and vocational courses. The effectiveness of these measures, however, is yet to be demonstrated (HOWIESON, 1993). Likewise in the **Netherlands, Portugal, Spain** and **Denmark** certain courses are already modularised and the process is under way for others. In **Denamrk**, for the moment, this type of organisation concerns mainly the courses run by the *AMU* for semi-skilled and unskilled workers. In the **Netherlands**, on the other hand, apprenticeship has already been considerably modularised and technician training (*MBO*) will be soon. The **Portuguese** government aims to modularise all the courses organised by the *escolas profissionais* in order to strengthen links between training and work while the new technician courses in **Spain**, the *CF-2* and *CF-3* will be organised on this basis.

4.8 **Accreditation of prior learning** is important both for young people and for adults. In the case of the former it concerns predominantly young people who have left the education and training system with no qualifications or who have dropped out even before the end of compulsory education. The idea is to evaluate what they know and can do in order to guide them towards suitable training courses. As far as adults are concerned the aim is similar but based on their previous qualifications and/or job experience. Recent measures in **France** have extended the possibility for individuals to have their competences evaluated in the *Centres de Bilan* and are establishing the basis for *Centres de Validation* which give accreditation. The **British** and **Irish** systems are attempting to set up the necessary infrastructures in colleges and other centres to accredit prior learning. The

competences accredited give exemption from courses. Under the NVQ system in the **United Kingdom**, this accreditation will give NVQ units which can be cumulated to gain the full qualifications. Reform proposals in **Spain** and **Portugal** are looking at the feasibility of infrastructures required for similar systems.

4.9 Whereas distance learning is common throughout the EC countries, provision for **open learning** is less usual. The former is a subset of the latter. Open learning has been defined as "systems which enable individuals to take part in programmes of study of their choice no matter where they live or whatever their circumstances *or* the adaptation of available learning opportunities to meet the needs of the learner in a way that optimises the autonomy of the learner as well as the effectiveness of the process of learning" (PARKES, 1991).

Open learning schemes aim at individualising learning and enabling working or unemployed people to progress from the point they have reached without being obliged to follow complete courses, and in a way suited to their lifestyle. This means people for whom attendance at a college, school or other training centre on a regular basis would be difficult (e.g. shift workers, disabled people, people with family responsibilities or those living far from the teaching centres). Open learning offers potential solutions to the obstacles raised for many potential students by fixed entry and exit points, by a fixed place of learning, etc. (PARKES, 1991). This type of approach has been rapidly developing in the **Netherlands** throughout the 1980s both in adult education in general as well as specifically for the unemployed. Here, as in the **United Kingdom** and **Ireland**, access is a vital issue in further and higher education.

4.10 Vocational education and training fufils several functions in our societies. Obtaining a particular qualification in order to facilitate labour market (re-)

entry or to enter at a particular level is obviously of great importance. However the social functions, though more implicit, are no less important and vary from one country to another. Thus, as has been well analysed in many sociological studies, the education and training process situates the individual within the society in terms of expectations, hierarchy and values. It is obviously outside of the scope of this report to analyse these considerations in depth. Some comments on the labour market aspects are nevertheless useful.

4.11 In most of the EC countries there is no direct or obligatory **link between certificates or diplomas obtained and employment and salary level.** Qualifications indicate a certain level and/or type of training undergone. They indicate also that the person has achieved certain knowledge in the theoretical or academic subjects which is sometimes more important than the specific skills acquired. As technological change has affected an increasing number of occupations, as well as the speed and rate of change for some of them, firms are taking on young people for their capacity to adapt and integrate change, rather than for their specific skills. This, as well as high unemployment levels, has led to an inflation in qualifications with firms continually looking for higher levels of qualification to take up posts previously filled by lower skill levels. Combined with the reduction in absolute terms of the numbers of posts available to skilled workers, this leads to an ever increasing pressure on that end of the labour market. It is not surprising, in this context, that increasing numbers of young people stay in education and training and the European countries are seeking to develop adequate progression routes from skilled worker level.

4.12 One sector of employment in which qualifications remain a determining factor are the national civil services and other public sector employment. In most countries, qualifications determine the level at which the applicant will enter the civil service whether through competitive exams or directly.

However, as far as the private sector is concerned few direct links still exist. Notable exceptions are **Denmark**, **Luxembourg** and **Germany**. These apprentice training systems, in which the social partners are heavily involved, ensure the entry and salary levels of the young people afterwards. **Italian** qualifications are linked to the labour office service, ensuring the registration of the person at the level reached but this does not necessarily correspond to the job and salary.

4.13 The challenge for the coming years for VET in EC countries will be the capacity of governments to develop the infrastructures and resources capable of integrating and taking to a suitable level of qualification those groups of young people and adult workers hitherto excluded. Whether they will subsequently find adequate openings on the labour market remains to be seen.

5. ISSUES IN THE CERTIFICATION OF VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING

Access and parity of esteem

5.1 As has been discussed in Chapter IV, similar developments can be observed in many of the EC countries in response to two major preoccupations: access and parity of esteem.

5.2 Access concerns all the countries in different ways. It means both increased access for adults (employed and unemployed) to courses leading to accredited qualifications and access to initial vocational education and training for young school leavers, especially the under achievers. The access issue, in a broad definition, includes questions of modes of study as well as those concerning progression routes.

5.3 Parity of esteem between academic and vocational education is a difficult issue to which there is often no single reply. It poses both the problems related to higher education entry for holders of vocational awards and those related to the labour market. It is further complicated by the growing tendency for vocational routes to become less specific and more general. As Jaap Dronkers points out in a recent issue of the **European Journal of Education**, in the **Netherlands** as the preference for vocational education grows, so its content becomes more general (DRONKERS, 1993). In the same publications Alison Wolf notes that in a common Europe-wide response to labour market developments and shifts in the educational systems, countries are making vocational programmes less specific in their coverage and introducing more "academic" or general elements. With constant economic and technological change, detailed planning becomes

difficult and for many jobs the pre-entry education and training is used largely as a way of "filtering and ranking applicants" (WOLF, 1993).

5.4 Bridges and progression routes are often linked to modularised approaches where common modules can lead into different specialisms. The modularised approach to VET in **Scotland** is a good example of this. Similarly, reforms in **Portugal** aim to allow movement between general and technical education through modularisation of courses. There are obviously limits to the flexibility established and it might well depend simply on what is on offer in a particular institution.

The above cannot of course be a guarantee of good progression for individuals. This is true both in **Denmark** and the **Netherlands** where the infrastructure for progression exists. To what extent the bridges established are used will also depend on social and labour market factors as well as the individual's motivation and the possibility of financing one's progression. Barriers to progression may also come from the theoretical content of a lower level course which will not allow the trainee to keep up on the higher level course. This for example has been noted on some **British** courses in technical areas and is also the case in **France** for the holders of a *baccalauréat professionnel* who register on university courses. This obviously raises the issue of bridging courses, or adapting teaching to suit different publics and backgrounds if access and progression are really to be facilitated.

5.5 Other attempts to open up further and higher education include the accreditation of prior learning and open learning schemes. In a period when working people are increasingly required not just to demonstrate what they know or can do, but also to produce the relevant certificate, the certification of skills and competences gained through working experience

should increase the individual's chances of staying in the labour market and of being able to build on qualifications.

5.6 Improving access is essential as is also ensuring parity of esteem between vocational and academic routes. By parity of esteem we mean the consideration given to vocationally oriented education in comparison with academic education in terms both of access to higher education and to employment. It became clear during the 1980s that higher education could not be limited to those school leavers who had obtained the traditional award for university entrance. There was an increasing demand from holders of vocational education and training awards for access to higher education institutions and routes. This demand came both from young people who wanted to continue their studies to increase their chances on the labour market subsequently, and from working people who had been made redundant and wished to raise their level of qualification.

In some cases parity of esteem is formalised through legislation. So the creation of the *baccalauréat professionnel* in **France** has been very important in opening up new progression routes to young people with a craft qualification and has established a vocational strand within the range of *baccalauréats* on offer. In **Luxembourg** the *Certificat de fin d'études secondaires techniques* has been given an equivalence with the academic certificate, opening up more higher education routes to holders of the former. From 1992 on in **Germany**, those trainees who entered apprenticeship with the *Hauptschule* diploma, or with no qualifications, will automatically be granted the *Realschule* diploma on completion of their apprenticeship opening up further training routes for them.

Due to the decentralisation of the **Irish** and **United Kingdom** systems, and the relative independence of institutions, parity of esteem has come about in a less formal fashion. Individual colleges or universities have been able

to decide by themselves to take students with non-typical qualifications or to set up foundation courses to prepare students.

5.7 Finally the **Netherlands** should be mentioned as an example of a country where vocational qualifications are held in high esteem, particularly by employers, which does not however imply that no improvements could be made in the movement between the different levels and types of edcuation in the Dutch system, an issue which is currently being addressed. The **German** system of apprenticeship until very recently was the main route open to young people and totalised a higher number of enrolments than higher education.

Towards mobility

5.8 A comparison of certification practices aims to increase the transparency of the 12 systems, helping the actors in each of the systems to understand and appreciate more fully how qualifications are obtained in the partner countries. Increasing and facilitating the mobility both of trainees/students and working people has been identified as a major challenge within the EC. In concrete terms this means that employers will be faced with evaluating the qualifications of applicants from other Community countries. For the moment there is no official infrastructure to advise on these questions and the demand is as yet in its early stages, mobility being limited to certain occupations and countries (or regions).

5.9 While pan-European projects are investigating in the field what equivalences can be established, other bilateral agreements are experimenting with joint accreditation. It is not possible to mention here all the pilot schemes and experimental projects under way. One example is the **European Social Fund** financed project, **Euroqualification**, a sector-oriented initiative which aims to promote greater coherence and

convergence of training programmes, thus laying a basis for mutual or joint recognition. For several years now there have been isolated examples of joint awards such as some British technician awards made by *BTEC* which can be obtained jointly with, for example, French equivalent awards. These experiments are often limited to particular institutions. On the other hand the French state's accreditation commission has recently officially accredited five Irish awards which are therefore obtained with the joint validation of the French and Irish systems.

5.10 The above, while remaining partial or pilot examples, are encouraging and emphasise the need for developing information structures. This comparative analysis has demonstrated the immense complexity of the systems and the variety of issues and preoccupations. Some are common to most of the countries, others concern the specific structuring and (re-) adaptation of a system to a fast moving industrial environment. The social partners will be required to play an increasingly important role in an adapted and adaptable certification system, whether through consultation procedures, participation in examinations, accreditation of occupational sector-based awards or in their essential role as providers of sufficient numbers of training places for young and adult trainees.

5.11 The issue common to all the European partners is that of providing a sufficiently flexible approach to certification of skills and competences to allow as many young and adult learners as possible to benefit from courses and certification. Equity, in terms of reducing barriers of age, sex and educational background and taking on board special needs are major keys to flexible and accessible systems. Alongside these social preoccupations is the need to develop an approach to quality assurance adapted to each national system reflecting the role of the different partners in the education and training process.

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APPENDIX I

OVERVIEW OF VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING QUALIFICATIONS IN THE EUROPEAN COMMUNITY

The qualifications and certificates taken into account for the purposes of this report are listed below by level, mode of acquisition and country.

The report examines the production of qualifications and qualified people at three levels: European Community Levels 2, 3 and 4; that is skilled worker, technician and higher technician. Certification of Level 1 courses will also be taken into account within the context of the special schemes and programmes.

As can be seen below some countries have predominantly full-time courses with limited work-based provision. Others, on the contrary, favour work-based provision. In some cases both routes will be available at all levels. Where a certain type of provision is not available in a particular country this has been indicated in the appropriate list.

Sections 1 and 2 cover vocational education and training (VET) within the framework of initial VET. Section 1 presents full-time qualifications while Section 2 lists work-based awards. Both sections include three tables, one for each of the three levels mentioned above. Some of the qualifications are solely school-based. Others can be obtained either full-time in schools (or in a post-compulsory institution) or through part-time study (usually apprenticeship). They all offer the award holder the possibility of entering the labour market, though they do not fix the level of entry, or the salary. However, it should also be

noted that at technician level, some of the awards are more oriented to higher education entry than to labour market entry.

Section 3 shows the qualifications obtained through special schemes and programmes which are all the more important when youth unemployment is high. A distinction must be made between those programmes from which the trainee obtains a certificate of attendance or attainment, and those which give a formal qualification integrated into the national system. Both may of course be significant and recognised in labour market terms. In some countries (e.g. France), special schemes are considered to be part of continuing education and training.

Finally Section 4 covers continuing education and training. The definition of this is taken to be all education and training received during the working life of an adult. The same distinction as above must be made between certificates and diplomas which are integrated into the national system and those which are specific either to an occupational sector or even just to the centre conferring them.

In each section the diplomas and certificates listed are those which are most common and are taken by the largest number of people in each of the countries. This is not to deny the importance of awards concerning small numbers of people but to present a synoptic picture. Readers are advised to consult the national monographs for more detailed information.

1. Full-time and school-based awards

1.1 European Level 2: awards at the level of skilled worker

These are the first level of full vocational qualifications obtained after the end of compulsory education. They traditionally led directly into the labour market. Currently, however, there is a tendency to create progression routes to higher levels of training.

Courses take place either in secondary schools or in specific post-compulsory institutions.

Belgium	*Certificat de Qualification de fin de 5ème/6ème/7ème*
Denmark	no full-time courses at this level;
France	*Certificat d'aptitude professionnel (CAP)*, the *Brevet d'enseignement professionnel (BEP)*, the *Certificat d'aptitude professionnel de l'agriculture (CAPA)* and other accredited awards;
Germany	few full-time courses at this level (e.g. *Berufsfachschulen Abschlusszeugnis* in specialised areas)
Greece	*Technikes Epangelmatikes Scholes* certificate; *OEEK-IEK* Apprenticeship Certificate (at the planning stages);
Ireland	*Vocational Preparation and Training 2* and *Post Leaving Courses*; Joint *FAS/City and Guilds* Certificates; *Teagasc Horticulture Skills* course;
Italy	*Diploma di qualifica*;
Luxembourg	*Certificat d'Aptitude Technique et Professionnelle (CATP)*;
Netherlands	*Kort middelbaar beroepsonderwijs (KMBO)* (2 - 3 years)
Portugal	*Certificado de aptidão profissional; certificados de formação and de aptidão* from the *escolas profissionais* (adults) and the *ensino profissionnal*;

Spain	*Formación profesional 1* (shortly to be abolished);
United Kingdom	*NVQ Level 2/3, SVQ Level 2, GNVQ and gSVQ Level 2* but also still *City & Guilds craft certificate, RSA certificates, BTEC First Diploma*.

1.2 European Level 3: technician awards

These awards are equivalent in level to the diplomas conferred at the end of secondary general education.

There are two types of award at this level:

- those which mainly give access to higher education

and

- those which allow direct entry to the labour market.

Where both types of award exist they are both mentioned. This means that in France, for example, *the Baccalauréat professionnel* and the *Brevet de technicien* are included as well as the more academic *Baccalauréat technologique*. In certain countries the same award serves both purposes.

The courses take place both in schools and in specific post-compulsory VET establishments.

Belgium	*CESS technique*;
Denmark	*Hojere Handelsexamen, Hojere Teknisk Examen*; other technician awards e.g. Building Technician;
France	*Baccalauréat technologique, baccalauréat professionnel, brevet de technicien* and other accredited awards;

Germany	*Fachschuldiplom*;
Greece	*Technika Epangelmatika Lykia*; *EPL* - Certificate of Integral Multi-discipline Lyceum; *Naftika Lykia* (Merchant Navy); *OEEK-IEK* Apprenticeship Certificate (at the planning stages);
Ireland	*National Council for Educational Awards (NCEA) National Certificate*; *FAS Advanced Skills* training courses
Italy	*Maturità e/o abilitazione professionale*
Luxembourg	*Diplôme de fin d'études secondaires techniques* and *Diplôme de Technicien*;
Netherlands	*Middelbaar beroepsonderwijs (MBO)*: long courses 3 - 4 years;
Portugal	*Ensino secundario técnico-profissional*; *certificados de formação* and *de aptidão* from the *ensino profissional*;
Spain	*Formación profesional 2* (full secondary education + one year), to be replaced by *Ciclos Formativos de Grado Medio (CF-2)*;
United Kingdom	*GNVQ and gSVQ Level 3, BTEC National diploma, SCOTVEC National diploma*.

1.3 European Level 4: higher technician awards

Finally, through full-time education and training, there are the following higher technician awards which are studied for either in secondary schools, post-compulsory institutions or higher education institutions.

Belgium	*Graduat* (2 to 4 years);
Denmark	awards from the *Advanced Technical Training Schemes*
France	*Brevet de technicien supérieur*, *Diplôme universitaire de technologie* and other accredited awards;

Germany	*Assistenten Ausbildung* (Berlin and Baden-Würtemberg only);
Greece	all awards at this level by alternance mode;
Ireland	*NCEA Technician Diploma*;
Italy	*Diploma universitario di primo nivello*
Luxembourg	*Diplôme d'ingénieur-technicien (l'Institut Supérieur de technologie* - 3 years), *brevet de technicien supérieur* (2 years);
Netherlands	*Hoger Beroeps Onderwijs* (NB this is a 4-year course);
Portugal	*Ensino profissional*;
Spain	*Ciclos Formativo de Grado Superior (CF-3)*; *Diplomado Universitario* of the *Escuela Universitaria de grado medio*;
United Kingdom	*BTEC Higher National Diploma, SCOTVEC Higher National Diploma*.

2. <u>Work-based awards for initial VET</u>

This term is used to indicate that the training course is carried out both in the workplace and in a school, training centre or other post-compulsory institution. The trainee has either a training contract with a firm or a work contract.

The traditional term used to describe this type of training at skilled worker level is apprenticeship which usually involves some form of day release for the off-the-job training element. In Germany this approach is referred to as the "dual system" and the term is now also used in other countries to refer to an integrated training programme where the content of the on-the-job element is clearly defined and assessed. At higher education level similar courses are frequently called sandwich courses and are built on a block-release basis. In recent years the term "alternance" has been increasingly used to refer to both of the above, indicating, as the name suggests, movement between on-the-job

and off-the-job training. This term has been used below where there is no specific national term.

Apprenticeship is most common at European Level 2, but also exists at Levels 3 and 4. Most countries have the traditional skilled worker level of apprenticeship or a similar form of alternance training. In France and the UK, however, it is possible to go to higher technician level through different types of alternance courses or part-time study.

The term part-time study is used to indicate that the course provision is not linked to a training or work contract, nor is it necessarily part of an integrated course. Part-time study may take place during the day or in the evening.

2.1 European Level 2

Belgium	*Apprentissage des classes moyennes, apprentissage industriel*;
Denmark	initial vocational training apprenticeship awards;
France	*CAP*, *BEP* and *CAPA* by apprenticeship and other accredited awards;
Germany	*Facharbeiterprüfung, Gesellenprüfung, Kaufmann/Kauffraugehilfenprüfung* and *Landwirtschaftgehilfenprüfung*;
Greece	*Meses Technikes Nosileftikes Scholes* (Health care certificate); *Scholes Touristikon Epangelmaton* certificate; *OAED-Scholes Mathitias* or *Kentra Technikis Epangelmatikis Katartisis* (Apprenticeship certificate)
Ireland	*National Craft Certificate* (3 years); *NTCB Craft Certificate*; *Teagasc Farm Apprentice Certificate*;
Italy	*Qualifica professionale* (apprenticeship organised by the Regions);

Luxembourg	*CATP* by apprenticeship;
Netherlands	*Apprenticeship primary/secondary level*;
Portugal	apprenticeship awards, *escolas profissionais* and *ensino profissional* (evening classes or part-time)
Spain	no apprenticeship training at present;
United Kingdom	*NVQ* and *SVQ level 2/3, City and Guilds, RSA, BTEC First Certificate*.

2.2 European Level 3

Belgium	no accredited award for alternance training at this level;
Denmark	no award for alternance training at this level;
France	*Baccalauréat professionnel* by apprenticeship and other accredited awards;
Germany	Mastercraft certificate;
Greece	currently no award for alternance training at this level but some *OEEK/IEK* courses in planning stages;
Ireland	*City and Guilds Advanced Craft Certificate*;
Italy	no award for alternance training at this level;
Luxembourg	no award for alternance training at this level;
Netherlands	*MBO* (part-time) and *Apprenticeship Secondary/Tertiary* levels;
Portugal	technician apprenticeship awards,
Spain	no award for alternance training at this level;
United Kingdom	*SVQ and NVQ level 3/4, BTEC National Certificates, SCOTVEC National Certificates*, City and Guilds Advanced Craft Certificate.

2.3 European Level 4

Belgium	no accredited award for alternance training at this level;
Denmark	no award for alternance training at this level;
France	*Brevet de technicien supérieur* (by apprenticeship or part-time) and other accredited awards;
Germany	*Berufsakademie diplom* (Berlin, Bayern and Baden-Würtemberg);
Greece	*Anoteres Scholes Emporikou Naftikou* (Merchant Navy); *Anotera Scholi Touristikon Epangelmaton*; other *Anotores Scholes* (music, theatre, etc.);
Ireland	awards of certain professional bodies;
Italy	no award for alternance training at this level;
Luxembourg	*Brevet de technicien supérieur* (part-time);
Netherlands	*HBO* (part-time) and *Apprenticeship Tertiary Level*;
Portugal	*Ensino profissional* awards;
Spain	no award for alternance training at this level;
United Kingdom	*SVQ and NVQ level 4, BTEC Higher National Certificates, SCOTVEC Higher National Certificates* and awards of certain professional bodies.

3. Awards specially designed for young people who have left the system with no qualifications

These awards exist most frequently at European Level 1, Introductory Qualifications, but also at Level 2. In some cases these course are in fact designed to give modules of a Level 2 award. They are often specially financed schemes and may follow the alternance mode of training. In some countries they are considered part of continuing education and training because of the financing procedures, e.g. this is the case in France. The difficulty here is often

distinguishing between courses which lead to a full vocational qualification, or the first part of one, and those courses and schemes which give non-accredited awards. The latter may however assist in labour market entry.

Belgium	*Centre de formation en alternance (CEFA, DO), dispositif emploi-formation* - non-accredited awards;
Denmark	*AMU* certificates;
France	*contrat de qualification* under the provision of the *credit de formation individualisée* leads to an accredited award: *diplôme d'état, titre* or *diplôme homologué* or a *Certificat de Qualification Professionnelle* (award recognised by occupational sector agreements and accredited by the *Commission Nationale Paritaire de l'Emploi*);
Germany	some partial awards in some sectors: *Berufsgrundbildungs jahr* (full-time) and *Berufsvorbereitungs jahr* (full-time);
Greece	no provision at present but some *IEK* courses in the planning stages;
Ireland	courses run by FAS (*Basic Skills* and *Pre-Vocational Introductory Level*) and *Skills Foundation Programme* endorsed by City and Guilds and the Department of Education; *CERT* basic skills and *Teagasc* courses; *Youthreach Foundation Level* programmes;
Italy	courses run by the regions - *qualifica professionale* (Ministry of Labour accreditation);
Luxembourg	*Certificat de capacité manuelle - CCM* - (done in school, lower level than *CATP*); also possibility of completing *CATP* by 2 stages: *certificat d'initiation technique et professionnelle - CITP*, a modularised course; also special schemes;

Netherlands	Ministry of Education *orientation and taster access courses, LBO/VBO*, certified courses run by the Employment Services;
Portugal	*IEFP* courses - give course certificates only;
Spain	as part of the *Garantia Sociale: Escuela Taller*, training by the *INEM* but no accreditation;
United Kingdom	*Youth Training* (available to all school-leavers)*: NVQ and SVQ normally Level 2* awards but *Level 1* may also be taken e.g. for special needs trainees or as first step).

4. Continuing education and training (CET) qualifications

Awards for continuing education and training exist at all levels. There is the same problem of accreditation as above. The presentation has been limited to two categories of award: those which are part of the national system, or accredited to it, and those which though outside the system have value on the labour market.

Certificates given by private training organisations and which have no value other than the prestige of the training firm have not been included if they are outside all procedures of control, verification and validation. It is obvious that training certificates given by prestigious companies will be of use to the individual but cannot be included in a description of the systems and procedures for certification in the Member States. In addition, whereas recognised vocational qualifications are intended to ensure the mobility of the individual, private certificates may on the contrary limit the individual to a particular firm or occupational sector.

Though in the private sector continuing education and training awards are rarely linked directly to promotion and salary increases, they are often essential for promotion in the public sector.

Presenting a full picture of CET qualifications is further complicated by the practice of "add-on skills", e.g. commercial language training **enhances** a secretarial qualification but does not really change its nature (NB add-on skills should not be confused with joint awards such as a joint secretarial and language course where a comparable level is obtained in both areas. The same is true of word-processing skills, telephone skills, group dynamics and the many other short courses on offer (public or private). These courses are not mentioned (as such) below.

CET qualifications cover several situations which must be kept in mind. There are the additional qualifications and skills which the active population acquire during their working life. They also offer a "second chance" to those who left the initial education and training system either without qualifications, or with a low level of qualification. As such it can, for example, give the possibility of obtaining higher education awards. This latter orientation is not mentioned specifically in the list below.

The distinction between the adult education sector and CET is not always easily made. Though the former is not directly linked to employment, it may well be the means by which a person can return to the labour market. In some countries adult education has played a very important role, e.g. the *Volkhochschule* in Germany and the Folk High Schools in Denmark. Many possibilities exist for adult education and they cannot all be presented.

Belgium	*Promotion sociale* (under the auspices of the Ministères de l'Enseignement, leading to *diplômes homologués*);
Denmark	*AMU* awards for semi-skilled, skilled workers and for supervisors; *Master Craft Certificates*; "Open Education" courses at commercial and technical colleges, universities, etc.;
France	a) Diplomas for courses organised by *AFPA* and accredited by the *Ministry of Employment*; b) *Certificat de Qualification Professionnelle* (awards recognised by occupational sector agreements and accredited by the *Commission Nationale Paritaire de l'Emploi*) and *diplômes nationaux*;
Germany	a) *Facharbeiterprüfung, Gesellenprüfung, Kaufmann/Kaufraugehilfenprüfung* and *Wirtschaftgehilfenprüfung* available through retraining and further training courses; b) other level awards also, either by full-time, part-time or evening courses; c) *Meister* certificate; d) *Volkhochschul-Zertifikate* at various levels;
Greece	a) *OAED* short courses, not accredited, leading to Levels 1 and 2.; b) private and semi-public centres give non-accredited awards which are recognised for the labour market;
Ireland	all *FAS, CERT/NTCB* and *Teagasc* awards available as well as accredited awards for retraining and skills training; *NTCB Supervisory Level* or *Advanced Skills* training; *Vocational Training Opportunities Scheme*;
Italy	awards from the regions or private centres - some not formally recognised but it is also possible to obtain national diplomas;
Luxembourg	a) qualifications obtained by the *Education des Adultes* or by CET are the same as in secondary or higher technical

	education; b) other forms of CET only give attendance or attainment certificates; c) *Meister* certificate;
Netherlands	a) Basic Adult Education; b) General Secondary Education for Adults (*VAVO*); c) part-time *MBO* and *HBO* and parts of apprenticeship awards; d) partial formal accreditation of courses run by private centres;
Portugal	*Certificado de formação* and *de aptidão* from the *IEFP*;
Spain	a) *Certificación de profesionalidad (parcial) INEM*; b) awards accredited by the universities; c) awards from private and public centres but not all accredited;
United Kingdom	a) all previously mentioned recognised qualifications can be taken under CET; b) some of the awards of the awarding bodies cover CET only; c) awards specific to private centres have no formal recognition.

APPENDIX II

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This **Comparative Analysis of Systems and Procedures of Qualifications in the European Community** draws mainly on the following national monographs commissioned for this project by CEDEFOP in 1992 but also on a number of other sources which are listed after:

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APPENDIX III

Annex 1

Systems and procedures of certification
of qualifications and competences

DESCRIPTION OF TASKS

The description of tasks is the main result of the meeting on 10 and 11 September 1992.

Introduction

1. Main elements for understanding the education and training system as well as the structure of qualifications.

2. Field of the study:
- all levels of training and qualifications, without an in depth study of the (long) university education;
- initial education and training, general academic and technical or further education, youth training and continuing education and training.

* * *

I. **Scedule and explanation of concepts, creation and implementation of qualifications and certificates. Competent bodies, procedures, tripartite or joint bodies for consultation or decision (see schema presented by Mrs. Perker).**
Sector-based, regional, cultural or linguistic parameters.

i) legal recognition

Who has legal responsibility for the awards? Is it the state, the region, the establishment, a recognised private body?

Are there certificates/qualifications for technical and/or vocational training which fall outside the regular framework and, if so, do they correspond to national levels?

Can private qualifications be recognised by the state? How?

Who has ultimate responsibility for the validation of awards?

ii) the content

Where is the content of assessments and the syllabuses decided and by whom?

Who are the major influencing and representative bodies and how are they organised at national, regional, local and institutional level.

Describe the roles of the different Ministries involved, Employers' organisations and Trade Unions.

Do they have specific constitutional responsibility such as a veto, or is their role purely consultative?

II. **Access to qualifications: conditions, procedures, motives, routes and modalities**

1. Routes for accessing the different qualifications: traditional, new ones and/or second chance
2. Organisation of education and training: full-time, part-time, block release, alternance, etc.
3. Transition/transfer from one stream to the other/progression

ii) entry onto the course or admission to the exam:

Are there selection criteria? Are previous qualifications necessary? Which ones?

How flexible are the criteria? Can they be individualised and, in the case of continuous education and training, is there a procedure for assessment of prior learning?

What are the possibilities of following the course via self-study and distance learning?

What are the modes of study available (full-time, alternances, modular, etc.)?

ii) Progression routes

Describe the different progression routes which exist for each award.

Do the awards allow transfer to other "streams" within the education system or types of training? What bridges have been developed between awards to encourage transferability?

To what extent do they allow the holder to transfer to other employement within the same occupational sector or in another one?

* * *

III. **Certification: objective, content, organisation, procedure, method**

Assessment

i) assessment criteria:

On what type of criteria are the assessments based: competences, skills, knowledge, a mix. Is the content determined by occupational profiles and, if so, are they job-specific or do they cover an occupational family? Do they take into account performance criteria?

ii) modes of assessment:

For each certificate and/or qualification listed, what are the modes of assessment: continuous, final end exam, a mix. What is the role of skills testing, workplace assessment, work-based assessment?

The examinations

i) who sets the examinations

Who controls and sets exams? Who is responsible for the exams? Are they written centrally or locally or at some intermediate level? Does everyone take the same exam on the same day? Is the system based on variety or standardisation?

Are the examinations national, regional, local or specific to one establishment (educational or enterprise)?

ii) who are the examiners:

Are they marked centrally by a team brought together for that purpose? Are students examined by their own teachers, by a mixed panel?

* * *

IV. Utility, use, trends and problems

1. Elements of evaluation
2. Quantitative and qualitative trends

NB.: All technical terms used should be clearly defined to avoid misunderstanding

DURATION:

15.11.92: draft report
15.12.92: final report

APPENDIX IV

LIST OF ACRONYMS USED IN THE REPORT

A list of general acronyms comes first and is followed by a list presented by country.

ACRONYM	FULL NAME	ENGLISH TRANSLATION
GENERAL		
APL	Accreditation of prior learning	
CET	Continuing education and training	
EC	European Community	
VET	Vocational education and training	
BELGIUM		
CEFA	Centres de formation en alternance	Alternance training centres (French speaking community)
CESS	Certificat de l'enseignement secondaire supérieur	Secondary school leaving certificate
DO	Deeltijd Onderwijs	Alternance training centres (Dutch speaking community)
DENMARK		
AMU	Arbejdsmarkedsuddannelserne	Labour Market Board training centres
FRANCE		
AFPA	Association nationale pour la formation professionnelle des adultes	Adult vocational training organisation

BEP	Brevet d'enseignement professionnel	craft certificate
CAP	Certificat d'aptitude professionnel	craft certificate
CAPA	Certificat d'aptitude professionnel de de l'agriculture	agricultural craft certifcate
CFP	Certificat de formation professionnelle	vocational training certificate
CPC	Commissions professionnelles consultatives	Vocational consultative commissions
CPP	Certificat de perfectionnement professionnel	certificate in further vocational skills

GERMANY

BIBB	Bundesinstitut für Berufsbildung	Federal Insitute for Vocational Education
KMK	Ständigen Konferenz der Kultusminister	Standing Conference of Ministers of Education

GREECE

IEK	Instituta Epangelmatikis Katartissis	Institutes of vocational training
OAED	Organismos Apascholisseos Ergatikou Dynamikou	Organisation for manpower and employment
OEEK	Organismos Epangelmatikis Ekpedefssis kai Katartissis	Organisation for vocational education and training
TEI	Technologika Ekpedeftika Idrymata	Technological Educational Institutions

IRELAND

CERT	State Tourism Training Agency	
C&G/CGLI	City and Guilds of London Institute	
FAS	an Foras Aiseanna Saothair	Training and Employment Authority
NTCB	National Tourism Certification Board	
Teagasc	Agriculture and Food Development Authority	

LUXEMBOURG

CATP	Certificat d'aptitude technique et professionnelle	craft certificate
CCM	Certificat de capacité manuelle	introductory qualification (1st part of craft certificate
CITP	Certificat d'initiation technique et professionnelle	introductory qualification

NETHERLANDS

HBO	Hoger Beroeps Onderwijs	higher vocational education
KMBO	Kort middelbaar beroepsonderwijs	short intermediate vocational education
LBO/VBO	Lager Beroepsonderwijs/Voorbereidend Beroepsonderwijs	pre-vocational education
LOB	Landelijk Orgaan Beroepsonderwijs	National commission for vocational education
MBO	Middelbaar beroepsonderwijs	intermediate vocational education

PORTUGAL

IEFP	Instituto de Emprego et Formação	Employment and Training Institute

SPAIN

CF-2	Titulo de Técnico (grado media)	technician diploma (middle level)
CF-3	Titulo de técnico superior	higher technician diploma
FP-1	formación profesional-1	vocational training - 1
FP-2	formación profesional-2	vocational training - 2
INEM	Instituto Nacional de Empleo	National Institute for Employment

UNITED KINGDOM

BTEC	Business and Technician Education Council
C&G/CGLI	City and Guilds of London Institute
GNVQ	General National Vocational Qualifications
gSVQ	General Scottish Vocational Qualifications
NCVQ	National Council for Vocational Qualifications
NVQ	National Vocational Qualifications
RSA	Royal Society of Arts
SCOTVEC	Scottish Council for Vocational Education
SVQ	Scottish Vocational Qualifications

APPENDIX V

LEVELS OF QUALIFICATION USED BY CEDEFOP IN ITS RESEARCH ON COMPARABILITY

LEVEL 1
Training providing access to this level:

Compulsory education and professional initiation

This professional initiation is acquired at an educational establishment in an out-of-school-training programme, or at the undertaking. The volume of theoretical knowledge and practical capabilities involved is very limited. This form of training must primarily enable the holder to perform relatively simple work and may be fairly quickly acquired.

LEVEL 2
Training providing access to this level:

Compulsory education and vocational training (including, in particular, apprenticeships)

This level corresponds to a level where the holder is fully qualified to engage in specific activity with the capacity to use the instruments and techniques relating thereto. This activity involves chiefly the performance of work which may be independent within the limits of the relevant techniques.

LEVEL 3
Training providing access to this level:

Compulsory education and/or vocational training and additional technical training or technical education training or other secondary-level training

This form of training involves a greater fund of theoretical knowledge than Level 2. Activity involves chiefly technical work which can be performed independently and/or entails executive and co-ordination duties.

LEVEL 4
Training providing access to this level:

Secondary training (general or vocational) and post-secondary technical training

This form of training involves high-level technical training acquired at or outside educational establishments. The resultant qualification covers a higher level of knowledge and capabilities. It does not generally require mastery of the scientific bases of the various areas concerned. Such capabilities and knowledge make it possible in a generally autonomous or in an independent way to assume design and/or management and/or administrative responsibilities.

LEVEL 5
Training providing access to this level:

Secondary training (general or vocational) & complete higher training

This form of training generally leads to an autonomously pursued vocational activity - as an employee or as self-employed person - entailing a mastery of the scientific bases of the occupation. The qualifications required for engaging in a vocational activity may be integrated at these various levels.

CEDEFOP - European Centre for the Development of Vocational Training

Systems and procedures of certification of qualifications in the European Community
European Institute of Education and Social Policy
Jean Gordon

CEDEFOP panorama

Berlin: CEDEFOP - European Centre
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1993 - 110 p. - 21,0 x 29,7 cm

DE, EN, FR

free of charge - 5017 - EN -

panorama

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As part of the preparation by the social partners of the "Joint opinion on vocational qualifications and certification" adopted on 3 July 1992, CEDEFOP was asked to undertake an analysis of the certification systems and procedures being used in the Member States of the European Community.

The comparative analysis of the twelve national studies, delegated to an institute specializing in the international comparison of education and vocational training systems, was a first step towards a synthesis.

Such summary analysis of differing, highly complex and changing national situations is a challenging task.

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